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**Mad Knowledge in the Age of Mad Studies: On 'Psychosis', Writing  
and the Possibility of Interpretation.**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD Psychosocial Studies,**

**Birkbeck College, University of London.**

**Alan, B. Bristow**

**The work presented in this thesis is my own.**

**Signed: Alan B. Bristow**

## Abstract

The figure of madness has long been positioned as the literary, poetic or philosophical 'other', functioning as a point of non-meaning that marks the boundaries of discourse, thought and culture. Despite this, the task of rendering meaning from madness, often via its written expression, has a long and rich history. From psychiatry through to psychoanalysis and forms of critical theory, 'psychotic' text has continually been utilised to further knowledge claims about what constitutes madness as well as to demarcate disciplinary interests. The contemporary field of 'Mad Studies' is the latest project to problematize the act of supplanting meaning onto individual experience and thereby co-opt these complex facets of the human condition into academic or professional frameworks. This thesis engages with this set of debates and asks whether the written expression of madness can ever be analysed without necessarily re-inscribing it within such systems of knowledge, thereby committing forms of 'epistemic violence.' Whilst very urgent concerns circulate regarding the proliferation of 'mental illness' in contemporary society as well as questions as to who is best placed to tackle this contested arena, this thesis holds that the task of rendering meaning from madness requires urgent revisiting in order to provide a epistemological basis from which very real political and ethical action can follow.

The thesis is then divided into two parts. The first provides a survey of the ways in which examples of 'mad writing' have been repeatedly analysed to assist in the production of knowledge about 'psychosis' and, by implication, the social bond. The *Memoirs of Daniel Paul Schreber* is the main focus as the thesis moves from the psychoanalytic readings of Freud and Lacan, through to the positioning of Schreber as an arch modernist before engaging in the schizoanalytic project of Deleuze and Guattari. The second part of this thesis engages with a body of 'mad writing' produced by celebrated science fiction author, Philip, K. Dick. By demonstrating how PKD's *Exegesis* can be read at the level of 'psychosis' whilst *at the same time* providing insight on PKD's specific socio-cultural moment, this thesis constructs a method for analysing mad writing that challenges reductive or pathologising reasoning that ultimately serves to 'other' madness. It does so by offering a psychosocial reading, and an associated understanding of 'psychosis' as being key to moving beyond restrictive debates within Mad Studies type literature.

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*In memory of my grandparents, Eddy and Olwen Webster and my friend, Stefano Sica.*

*Dedicated to my son, Francesco.*

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## Introduction

A little under ten years ago, at the start of my mental health social work training, I made the obligatory visit to the local psychiatric inpatient facility. Supported by an experienced colleague, well versed in psychiatric assessment and treatment, my task was to interview a patient to plan his eventual discharge. During the visit, the patient recounted the events that had led to him being forcibly detained by mental health services. These were characterised by numerous paranoid and conspiratorial themes related to the security services, MI5 and the broader intelligence community. I was informed that the patient's 'delusional architecture' was one that repeatedly referenced his ongoing monitoring and surveillance by such clandestine, shadowy government forces. Such a delusional pattern was quite routine in psychotic patients. Although I can recall being taken aback by my first fully-fledged encounter with 'psychosis', I left the ward secure in the knowledge that what I had experienced was nothing more than an deviation from psychological 'normality'. One that would be managed and, ultimately, alleviated via the continued use of antipsychotic medication and a stable package of support once discharged back into the community.

Some days later, I came to learn that the patient in question was, in fact, subject to a 'Control Order', as implemented by the new *Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005*. I quickly found that such orders were utilised by police services to manage those deemed to be at high risk of committing terrorist activity, while allowing for various restrictions on their liberty. In the wake of the 7/7 bombings and the wave of media-led hysteria engulfing the western world about the threat of violent extremism, the patient had found himself under the direct management of police services. This situation had transpired following a low-level incident whereby others preying on his clear vulnerability had led him into a compromising situation. Mental health issues and vulnerability aside, the then Home Secretary ruled that the 'Control Order' should stand. This decision was made despite what the patient's psychiatrist and wider supporting team knew to be true; that this patient

was far from a criminal mastermind engaged in the planning and carrying out of terrorist atrocities. To the contrary, it was the individual's proximity to a geographical site of police interest that had led to him coming to the attention of security services.

This newly acquired knowledge on the patient's very particular social and legal situation gave me pause for thought. His supposed delusional thinking, related to surveillance by intelligence services, now took on a wholly different light. I was left wondering where exactly did his madness begin. The patient had a very genuine and plausible concern about being monitored by the police services. What was the pathological element to his paranoid worldview? Although his recounting of events took on an eccentric, if not bizarre form, it did not seem completely unreasonable to me that his increased levels of paranoia were well placed. Moreover, it is possible that his preoccupation with MI5 and their continued monitoring of his movements contained a kernel of truth. Yet, due to his certified 'schizophrenia' diagnosis, as well as the strange fashion in which he presented his paranoid ideas, whatever possible truth he was witness to was being overridden by a dominant medical discourse, as well as his perceived lack of legitimate reasoning. Subsequently, I found myself questioning the exact nature of his 'psychosis' and whether it could so easily be divorced from the social or cultural situation in which he found himself. Was there a clear and precise dividing line between his alleged madness and the actual truth? Could it be possible that this patient was simply amplifying a sense of paranoia, which was permeating throughout his local community? More to the point, was the body of knowledge and practice known as psychiatry best placed to assist me in gaining answers to these complex issues?

In many respects, this thesis represents the culmination of my time spent reflecting on those questions, which came from my initial encounter with this patient. It is my attempt to tackle the vexing concept of madness and to enter into some form of understanding concerning it. The path that I have taken to try and address these questions, that has led to my specific research project, has been a long and winding one. It is a path worth recounting, however, so that I can demonstrate how

the project initially took shape and how I was led to my research questions. In this way, I can also illustrate the various ideological or philosophical positions that underpin my own subjective stance; a stance that has led to the political framing of the entire project.

By the end of my training programme (mentioned above), I moved into the field of statutory mental health service. Here, my initial queries about the nature of madness quickly established themselves as fully-fledged concerns. First-hand, I saw the inadequacies of psychiatric diagnosis and the evident flaws of a system that categorised individuals in such a haphazard fashion. One did not need to be trained in medical science to see that how diagnostic terms were applied held little claim to objectivity or impartiality. Likewise, the use of anti-psychotic medication appeared, at times, coercive if not outright abusive. A disjointed foray into the world of critical theory (shoe-horned into the end of a social work MA) led me to a wholesale denouncement of all things psychiatric. As I stumbled through the texts, authors and theoretical positions contained under the banner of 'anti-psychiatry', a term coined by David Cooper and popularised by the work of R. D. Laing in the 1960s, I was greatly encouraged that there was widespread recognition of psychiatry as, at the very least, a problematic enterprise. Provided I followed the standard anti-psychiatry line, the answers to my concerns seemed clear. 'Schizophrenia' was not a deviation from reality, but rather a means for coping with a maddening world (Laing, 1960). Mental illness, I read, was not a disease similar in nature to physical ailments. It was a myth propagated by pharmaceutical companies and the worst excesses of capitalist interest (Szasz, 1961; Baruch & Treacher, 1978). Moreover, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) and its system of psychiatric classification, so the argument went, was an exercise in control and subjugation with medication providing the means to do so (Moynihan & Cassels, 2005). I was so sure that a wholesale re-ordering of the mental health services and related systems of disciplinary knowledge was required that my mind soon began to centre on the notion of undertaking a PhD to work through these ideas. Ultimately, I was looking to

position myself in respect of the arguments that had emerged from 1960's radicalism and the counterculture.

However, the initial naivety that accompanied my new-found sense of purpose soon subsided as I delved further into the world of critical psychiatry, pop philosophy, psychodynamic theory and many fictional or literary works detailing the workings of madness. Clearly, the question of madness was a complex, multifaceted one with a rich history of intersecting ideas and artistic representations. A general bewilderment now tempered my revolutionary zeal to dismiss all things psychiatric. To paraphrase Roy Porter (2002, p.1), a medical historian, madness appeared to me as the 'mystery of mysteries'. It was an enigma both inviting and repelling attempts at understanding. Put simply, I was left in a state of confusion as to how I could disentangle the diverse histories, systems of knowledge, and the numerous political positions that dealt with the concept. I knew I had a commitment to exploring the relation between madness and the socio-political forces that shape it. Still, I was adrift in a sea of competing disciplinary interests, complex ethical questions, and a library's worth of medical, scientific and philosophical texts: all competing to define madness as an aspect of the human condition.

While sifting through the literature comprising this diverse field, I chanced upon a text that had repeatedly surfaced across my preliminary research. The book was Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (1903), and it would provide the impetus to my later project, as well as help structure my overall research questions. Schreber's *Memoirs* is a Supreme Court Judge's detailed first-hand account of his slide into 'psychosis', and the book is characterised by a panoply of paranoid and delusional themes. I found the text a challenging, disorienting read. But what really struck me were the numerous different critical analyses that had been performed on the text—both within the psychoanalytic tradition and wider social theory (Freud, 1911; Lacan, 1955-56; Deleuze and Guattari, 1972; Santner, 1996; Kittler 1985). Schreber's *Memoirs*, I discovered, were providing inspiration for several theoretical formulations that straddled both clinical and cultural domains. In

the same way that my encounter with the 'schizophrenic' patient had made me re-evaluate my thinking about madness, I found myself reflecting on what this text meant, as well as what the means by which it had been utilised indicated about the text. Both the 'schizophrenic' patient and Schreber's *Memoirs* had elicited a strong reaction within me. This was based upon my fundamental difficulty in understanding what precisely was going on with their respective patterns of speech and writing. What exactly was being communicated to me in the patient's conversation and the Judge's script? In addition, both I realised had been presented to me via a system of knowledge already imposed upon them. The 'schizophrenic' patient had arrived already couched in the language and terminology of psychiatry—even before I had set foot on the ward. Likewise, Schreber's text was familiar to me by the time I first read it. This was due to the psychoanalytic thinkers and social theorists who had utilised it in their intellectual endeavours. This insight seemed of the utmost importance.

In so many ways, the diverse set of analyses surrounding Schreber, ones that largely comprise Part 1 of this thesis, ultimately provided the spark for my project. First, I began to appreciate how mad writing or 'psychotic' text seemed to be able to provide the raw material for a great many different readings, some of which were complementary, many less so. Schreber, far from being a mere example of the written ravings of the insane was, in fact, being held up by a range of prominent thinkers, theorists and authors as an especially profound document for gaining insight into the workings of human consciousness, as well as into the cultural, social and historical moment in which he was placed. This felt worthy of further exploration. Not only did it suggest that 'psychotic' writing may hold a particular value in understanding paranoid or delusional processes, but it also suggested that it provides a platform, possibly a privileged one, from which to critique or analyse 'the social'. Madness was, in effect, straddling the psychological and the social to the point where they could perhaps not so easily be divorced from one another. This, in turn, seemed to offer very real challenges to mainstream psychiatry which, for the most part, treated the expression of

madness (either through speech or writing) as simply 'proof' of a psychological irregularity, something that was plainly symptomatic of an underlying pathological abnormality that required alleviating or treating. If Schreber's text was being utilised to reveal his attunement to the social world in which he lived, then it suggested that one's madness may not, actually, represent the very opposite of reason and rationality that standard psychiatric theory implied. The division that medical thought establishes between the normal and the pathological (Canguilhem, 1978) was upended here by a set of associated thinkers utilising Schreber to argue that his 'pathological' writing does, in fact, reflect, harness or channel immediate socio-cultural themes. Just as the 'schizophrenic' patient's descriptions of his social standing reflected, in some complex sense, the pervading paranoia that he was legitimately experiencing, Schreber's 'mad writing' reveals to us something profound. Schreber's writing, according to a number of interpreters illustrates that psychological and social qualities are inexorably intertwined.

My new-found appreciation of 'psychotic text' and its potential to challenge psychiatric discourse enabled me to bring my initial search to a close and identify an adequate starting point for my thesis. Whatever project I was going to pursue, I realised that I should start with the expression of madness *itself*: in my case, with its written form. Rather than getting lost in the sea of theory about madness, I decided that I should start with the 'psychotic' subject themselves. This too contains potential pitfalls as expressions of madness will always, to some degree, be trammelled by systems of language or the communicative medium through which they are relayed. However, I was sure that my commitment to critical psychiatry would be best realised by taking the subjective experience of madness as my starting point, rather than the systems of knowledge surrounding it.

It was during my preliminary survey, where I chanced on the Schreber material, that I was also introduced to 'Mad Studies'. This was a pioneering new interdisciplinary approach to madness, which sought to radically overhaul the way it is thought about and taught—inside and outside of traditional areas of scholarship. Mad Studies placed a strong emphasis on service user rights, and it

demonstrated a commitment to examining the ethical basis for placing madness within certain political, medical or broader societal frameworks. Moreover, I soon discovered that a central concern of 'Mad Studies' related to the very question of what it means to take mad narratives and use them to further claims to knowledge. In fact, a sizable amount of the literature contained under this umbrella term seemed to be tackling head-on the entire notion of academics utilising 'mad' narratives to deduce clinical or cultural theory. The aforementioned analyses of Schreber now took on a different light. Did Mad Studies now offer a challenge to this set of theorists? Or, was there scope for incorporating how this 'psychotic' text had previously been read with this new development for thinking about madness and forms of distress?

Such questions form the basis of my research project, which asks whether it is possible to interpret 'psychotic' text to produce knowledge. My project also seeks dialogue with the central issues expressed by Mad Studies. By examining how 'psychotic' text has been interpreted, I will demonstrate how the task of rendering meaning from madness speaks to a core issue at stake within critical psychiatry: namely, how knowledge on madness is produced effectively determines who has the right to speak for it and determine where it is situated within society at large.

Critical Psychiatry, Mad Studies, 'psychotic' text and the mad writing of Daniel Paul Schreber were all now providing me with the coordinates for mapping out the beginnings of a research project. Yet, there was still one piece missing. If I was going to make an original contribution to a long history on the interpretation of madness, then it did not seem sufficient to simply regurgitate the readings of Schreber that had occurred over the last century. I needed something new; a text yet to be interpreted. In this way, I could enter directly into the critical practice of reading madness. Most importantly, I would see if I was able to do so while considering the key issues expressed within Mad Studies. However, the search for a 'suitable' 'psychotic' text was already beginning to raise some difficult questions. Was I not now already repeating the same manoeuvre as an aspiring academic and mental health professional who effectively wanted to use the narrative of another to

further my intellectual aims? What criteria could be employed to ascertain what counts as a 'psychotic' text without ensuring that the text itself is already shaped by certain forms of knowledge naming it as 'psychotic'? Indeed, many of the published texts that I chanced upon were presented as illustrative examples of medicalised understandings of 'schizophrenia' or 'bipolar disorder' (see Schiller, 2011; Hornbacher, 2009). Many more were styled as autobiographies or recovery narratives, often written sometime after the actual experience of 'psychosis' itself (Saks, 2008). These texts often came with the author's own attempt to make meaning from their experience. Many more came with attendant comments from treating psychiatrists or therapists, which again served to frame the experiences recounted in medical or theoretical terms (Sechehaye, 1994). Undoubtedly, a considerable proportion of the texts that I encountered primarily documented the coercive and draconian nature of asylum life, as well as the horrors witnessed within locked psychiatric wards (Kaysen, 2000). Identifying a text within the arena of mad writing (an arena which I sketch out below) was not proving a straightforward task.

As is often the case, I eventually found what I was looking for in quite an unexpected place. The missing piece to my proposed research project presented itself not through the trawling of databases, libraries and internet sites (which had engaged me for months), but through an area of interest that, up until then, I thought of as entirely separate to my professional and academic life. Science fiction, gothic horror and the weird literature of authors such as H. P. Lovecraft and Edgar Allan Poe through to William Burroughs and J. D. Ballard had long been my means of enjoyment and escape. Although madness and 'psychosis' are regular tropes in these speculative genres, which no doubt contributed to my interest in them, they are contained within works of fiction. Locating another Schreber in this literary corner seemed unlikely, or so I believed. One author who, more than most, utilised these tropes relating to psychopathology for his science fiction imaginings was



Philip K. Dick.<sup>1</sup> Someone I had read and admired for several years, although I knew little about his biography. A drug-addled hack within California's 60s counterculture? A psychedelic guru of new-age spiritualism? A pop philosopher churning out pulp sci-fi? These descriptions were the extent of my knowledge on PKD, who has received posthumous fame mainly through several big-screen adaptations of his work. A year into my PhD programme, I stumbled across PKD's intriguingly entitled *Exegesis of Philip K Dick* (2011). Recently published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, this abridged collection of nearly ten years of intense writing had been embargoed by the family estate since the writer's untimely death in 1982. Whatever algorithm threw up the title within my recommended purchases via an online bookseller had identified the text that I had been searching for.

As I skimmed over the blurb and reviews of *Exegesis*, my eyes were drawn towards the terms 'religious experience', 'spiritual visions', as well as the author's quest to unearth the 'nature of reality' and the 'relationship between the human and the divine.' I bought it immediately. Running at almost 1000 pages, and darting between any number of philosophical and theological themes, the task of reading the book did not come without certain challenges. PKD had undergone a 'spiritual' experience in 1974, and it was this experience which is said to have provided the catalyst for his writing the *Exegesis*. However, I was aware that although the possibility of the author's madness was not wholly absent from the editor's comments and reviews circulating around the book, any discussion related to that 'spiritual' experience, the writing of the book and its relation to 'psychosis' seemed minor at best. Once I had read PKD's biography, this inattention seemed even more curious as he undoubtedly held a near life-long relationship with different forms of mental distress and psychiatrisation. Indeed, I quickly learnt that PKD had, in fact, received a number of psychiatric labels. Moreover, I discovered that 'mental illness' was not only a familiar theme in his many novels and short stories, but that it could be used as a framework for understanding the life of the author and his works. The more I read the *Exegesis*, the more convinced I became that an argument could

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<sup>1</sup> From here on I shall mostly refer to Philip K. Dick by the popular shorthand, 'PKD' which he is often known by particularly within the science fiction fan community.

be made for positioning this as an example of 'psychotic' writing. It repeatedly struck similarities with the Schreber text and the theorists with whom I was engaged. Furthermore, the *Exegesis* invited a broader social interpretation whereby the main concepts, themes and ideas within it could form the basis for a cultural analysis. Just like Schreber's *Memoirs*, PKD's writing invited multiple readings. It raised the possibility of a 'psychotic' text once again providing the material for theoretical formulation—in both a clinical and cultural sense.

I am interested in PKD's *Exegesis* because it has specifically *not* been shaped by medicalized terminology or theoretical understandings of 'psychosis'. As stated, questions concerning the author's madness abound throughout his biographies and documented life. Likewise, many have questioned PKD's sanity during the writing and composition of the *Exegesis*, but they remain largely just that, questions. To the best of my knowledge, no thorough textual study has been done on this body of writing that explicitly frames it in respect of 'psychosis'. The chance to engage with a text yet to be taken over by the 'psy-discourses' (Rose, 1998) of psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis in respect of 'psychosis' allows me to explore doing so fully, but from a critical perspective. What does it mean ultimately to position such a text as being illustrative of 'psychosis'? And by doing so, does this disavow any other knowledge or interpretative reading that can be given? As I aim to show over the coming chapters, my answer to this is no. By rendering a body of writing as mad or 'psychotic' does not mean one has to delimit or foreclose other modes of understanding. To the contrary, I believe that opening up mad texts to plural readings has something of value to offer the Mad Studies project.

From the outset, I should state that my intention throughout this PhD project is not to prove that PKD was a certified 'psychotic'. As we shall see, his diagnostic picture is beset by multiple labels applied by numerous professionals over a lifetime of psychiatric involvement. It is also hampered by contradictions within his biography and own attempts at self-diagnosis. Despite the dubious ethics of trying to diagnose an individual via their textual output (some 30 years after their death), I am not

especially interested in proving one way or the other that PKD was clinically paranoid or 'schizophrenic' (if we can even agree on what those terms denote!). Rather, I am interested in mobilizing certain understandings of 'psychosis' as a way of organising the text around some conceptual criteria. As far as this thesis is concerned, the texts are the object of study, not the associated assumptions about the author's mental states when writing them. I am reading and interpreting Schreber's *Memoirs* and PKD's *Exegesis* to enter into the debates circulating within Mad Studies and further afield.

My intention with this project, then, is to examine, unearth and analyse how 'psychotic' text has been read to further different forms of theoretical production. My central hypothesis is that such a diverse set of readings—that straddle the individual and the social, or the clinical and the cultural—effectively reveals to us something about the nature of madness. Moreover, these readings (and their perspectives on madness and 'psychosis') are in stark contrast to current psychiatric knowledge, which serves mainly to relegate 'psychosis', 'schizophrenia' or any other related term to mere pathology. First, I will test my hypothesis by examining, in detail, how Schreber has been read by different theorists (Freud, 1911; Lacan, 1955-56; Santner 1996; Kittler, 1985; Deleuze and Guattari, 1972). This will present a series of interrelated theoretical concepts about the relation between the 'psychotic' subject and writing, as well as between psychic and social life. Then, I will utilise these concepts for my own analysis of PKD's *Exegesis* and conduct a series of readings. Drawing from Schreber's *Memoirs* and my readings of the *Exegesis*, I examine how knowledge is produced from instances of mad writing. Most important, I explore what this process *does* to madness itself. I hope that by tracing this line of enquiry, via forms of philosophical investigation, I encourage a renewed appreciation of how one can engage with madness itself—not just in an abstract literary sense, but in a very practice-orientated way. In sum, I hope to establish a method or practice for engaging with 'psychosis', drawn from my readings of mad text, which ultimately moves

beyond some of the debates circulating within critical psychiatry and Mad Studies; many of which argue that any reading of mad writing inadvertently commits forms of violence against it.

I have structured my thesis in two parts. Following a literature review on mad knowledge and the interpretation of 'psychotic' text, Part 1 comprises an extensive review of the different analyses of mad writing and the subsequent theories developed from these. Particular focus is given to Schreber's *Memoirs*. The second part includes three different, but complementary analyses that I have performed on Philip. K. Dick's *Exegesis*. The thesis closes by re-evaluating the place of claims to knowledge drawn from the interpretation of mad text. And I conclude by offering a set of reading practices for engaging with mad text. I hope these practices extend beyond pure textual analysis to inform mental health practice in the wider sense.

**Chapter 1** provides a philosophical foundation to my thesis by examining madness and its relation to writing. It also provides the beginnings of a methodology from which I will examine examples of mad writing and their corresponding analyses. To begin, I enter into the field of Mad Studies, and I draw out some of the key debates within it. These debates concern mainly how theorists have utilised mad narratives to further forms of knowledge production. I then trace a history of thought beginning with Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida's much-cited debate on madness' relation to language, discourse and knowledge. Madness, we will see, can be conceived as something occupying a strange position; an internal excess at the heart of reason which conditions language and thought *itself*. Foucault and Derrida are the first critical thinkers employed here, and I employ them throughout to advance the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis further. I also draw on Shoshana Felman's work (1978), as well as Derrida's (1994) later thoughts on psychoanalysis. This is to demonstrate the potential value of Freudian theory to this project's aims. Following this, I expand upon Louis Althusser's work (1968) to begin constructing a methodological framework, which will carry on throughout the whole project. Althusser's practice of 'symptomatic reading', as

well as a methodological caution offered by Eve Sedgwick (2003) in the form of her 'surface reading', conclude the chapter.

**Chapter 2** begins my extensive literature review of the theories that has been developed from mad writing, in particular the analyses conducted on Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs*. I start with Sigmund Freud (1911) and psychoanalysis generally. And I demonstrate how Freud's initial reading (the reading that Schreber will perhaps forever be positioned against) introduces the idea that a 'psychotic' subject's writing may contain a fundamental truth about their social or cultural existence. I emphasise Freud's assertion that 'psychotic' delusions or instances of paranoia are not, in fact, pathological events, but an attempt to provide stability or establish a social bond of sorts. Next, I discuss Jacques Lacan's (1955-56) reading of Schreber, as well as his other engagements with 'psychosis'. Lastly, I discuss Lacan's writing in the context of his later preoccupations with James Joyce (1975-76), and I especially focus on Lacan's concept of the *Sinthome*.

**Chapter 3** moves on to examine three other readings of Schreber that I argue can be grouped under the banner of modernism. I demonstrate how the works of Louis Sass (2017), Eric, L. Santner (1996) and Friedrich Kittler (1985) all utilise *Schreber's Memoirs* to identify particular modernist themes. From modern forms of surveillance and mechanisms of self-reflexivity, through to a specific socio-symbolic crisis experienced within *fin de siècle* Saxon Germany, and finally to marked changes in the structure of writing and language that resulted from modernist forms of media technology, Schreber's text will be shown to channel modernist themes in both form and content. It is through Freud and these later theorists of modernism that I show the psychosocial nature of Schreber's text.

**Chapter 4** closes Part 1 of this thesis. I engage with the works of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1972), in particular those aspects of their theoretical output taken from examples of 'psychotic' text (for example, the writing of Schreber), to offer an alternative theoretical framework for reading mad writing. Deleuze and Guattari's 'schizoanalysis' provides an important counter to

the largely psychoanalytically-inflected theory that has underscored the psychosocial nature of mad writing thus far. By introducing concepts, such as the 'Body-Without-Organs' and the 'desiring-machine', I demarcate schizoanalysis from its psychoanalytic forbear, as well as from aspects of the anti-psychiatry movement, all of which can be established via Deleuze and Guattari's own use of 'psychotic' text. At the end of Part 1, I introduce a wide range of different theoretical positions and concepts drawn from examples of mad writing. I argue that a psychosocial form of analysis is the key to conjoining individual experience to broader socio-cultural issues. In my view, a commitment to psychosociality might be the means to move beyond some of the reasoning within Mad Studies, in particular, those projects that get embroiled in the issue of epistemic violence.

**Part 2** of the thesis introduces my study of Philip K. Dick's *Exegesis*. **Chapter 5** sets out some brief biographical material on PKD and his relation to 'psychosis'. I touch upon some of the critical commentary surrounding PKD's life and work, which situates him against a postmodern paradigm (which is itself partly constructed from the notion of 'cultural schizophrenia'). I emphasise the inherent dilemmas of trying to diagnose the character of PKD, as well as discuss some of the debates surrounding this issue and the *Exegesis*. To close the chapter, I review some of the current scholarship on the *Exegesis*.

**Chapter 6** begins my own psychosocial reading of the *Exegesis* by drawing on a largely Lacanian framework. I refer to Lacan's theoretical insights (1955-56) gained from his analyses of Schreber, as well as Lacan's general approach to the 'psychoses'. From this, I conduct a Lacanian interpretation of the *Exegesis* that argues for a 'psychotic' structure at work within the text. Moving from the Imaginary, to the Symbolic, and onto the Real, I demonstrate how PKD's writing serves as his very own *Sinthome*. I argue that he does this as a means to fashion a social bond and stabilise his subjectivity through the practice of writing. I also evidence PKD's use of idiosyncratic language and the role of the body in his exegetic output, which illustrate the 'psychotic' structure that can be said to be underwriting the composition of the *Exegesis*.

**Chapter 7** extends my analyses of the *Exegesis* beyond strict clinical concerns related to ‘psychosis’. It does this by focusing on one major thematic element within PKD’s writing: time, or rather his notion of ‘orthogonal Time.’ I demonstrate how this concept for PKD, as well as his subjective relation to time that he commits to writing, not only accords to various phenomenological accounts of time experienced by ‘psychotics’, but also harnesses a set of socio-cultural debates that emerged at a similar historical period as the *Exegesis*’s construction. These debates and theoretical propositions relate to what I am labelling ‘postmodern time’. I introduce various ‘postmodern’ theorists who advocate for a fundamental change in our collective experience of temporality, because of the rapid changes in digital and communicative technology. This, I argue, strikes a chord with PKD’s conception of orthogonal time. Moreover, this discussion introduces the theme of networked digital communication and the way in which subjectivity has been affected by such developments. I close by examining how Gilles Deleuze sees one’s relationship with altered domains of time as offering the means to ‘become’ something ‘other’.

PKD’s changing nature of subjectivity, evidenced through his writing, is the theme of **Chapter 8**. This last psychosocial reading of PKD’s *Exegesis* examines how his writing about the nature of his own body (the same element I examine in chapter 6), also evidences his attunement with various technological changes and developments within information theory at the same historical period in which he resided. Referring to the evolving theory known as cybernetics, I demonstrate how PKD’s altered sense of subjectivity illustrates his process of ‘becoming-information’, as well as his evolving understanding of the post-human condition. In doing this, I show how the *Exegesis* has a cultural value beyond revealing clinical insights related to ‘psychosis’.

**Chapter 9** concludes the thesis. I re-examine some of the central issues pertaining to the use of mad writing. This is to deduce knowledge following my excursion through the *Exegesis* of Philip K. Dick and the *Memoirs* of Daniel Paul Schreber. Moreover, I emphasise my main argument for the benefits of a psychosocial interpretation of mad text. In my view, a psychosocial reading that

identifies the paradoxical status of madness as something existing in between the individual and the social or, put differently, as an entity that exists on a continuum between clinic and culture, is able to free itself from the restrictive language used within Mad Studies. To close the final chapter, I review my own set of reading practices so that they may be utilised in future attempts to analyse 'psychotic' writing which adhere to the ethical impulse at the heart of the Mad Studies project. I also put forward these reading practices as a means to go beyond those debates solely centred on the issue of epistemic violence.

### **A Note on Language**

Engaging in any academic project that contains technical or specialised language runs the risk of terms, concepts, or ideas losing some precision as we enter into the debates concerning the meaning of such terms. The language of madness is perhaps one of the most fraught in terms of its contested nature, and this represents a degree of difficulty going forward. As we shall come to see in detail, terms such as 'psychosis', 'schizophrenia', delusion and madness hold a great many different meanings to a great many different people. Where an individual stands in relation to these terms speaks to this thesis in its entirety. Although I have stated from the outset that my interest is in madness and the forms of knowledge derived from it, I have specifically chosen not to try and define what madness is. This is mainly because I think it is near enough impossible to do. At best, I view 'madness' as an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of emotional, psychological and subjective states of being, which have shifted over time and which are dependent on any number of socio-cultural framings. The strength of projects such as Mad Studies, in my opinion, is that they avoid prescriptive understandings of these terms. Instead, they opt for forms of self-definition by those who wish to name themselves as mad. It is also important to acknowledge that my interest in madness is largely in respect of another hugely contested term: 'psychosis'. This 'classic form' of madness relating to delusions, paranoia and hallucinations may appear to have a stronger case for



arriving at a definition. However, I would again argue that the contested nature of the term ensures that it remains problematic. Therefore, whenever I refer to 'psychosis' within the following chapters I denote it in parentheses to acknowledge its contested status. Regarding the concept of madness, I keep with the spirit of Mad Studies and forms of mad pride/activism, which seek to establish the term as positive or, at least, non-negative. 'Psychosis', of which most of this thesis is concerned, stems largely from intellectual attempts to define an area of madness. The two are not interchangeable. However, I do often refer to mad text or 'psychotic' text in a very similar way. Whatever 'psychosis' may or may not be, it is for the purposes of this thesis one way in which an attempt to define a specific area of madness has been made yet it remains a hotly debated category, something that will become apparent over the coming pages.

*"Nothing can be interpreted out of a work without at the same time being interpreted into it" - Theodore Adorno (1984, p.153).*

## **Chapter 1: Literature Review: Situating Mad Studies and the Interpretation of Mad Text**

As I embark now on a survey of the many different sites that comprise the field of Mad Studies, 'psychotic' text and previously established attempts to derive knowledge from madness, it is worth noting from the outset that this intersection between madness, writing and knowledge has a rich history and one that has been enacted in various different disciplinary or intellectual guises. This initial chapter will demonstrate how this 'madness-writing' relation has been conceived within literature and philosophy as well as forms of psychoanalysis. The emergence of Mad Studies as the latest incarnation of attempts to problematize thinking about the place of madness in contemporary society is built upon this historical legacy, whilst incorporating these diverse areas of thought. As we shall come to appreciate it also, importantly, seeks to challenge them. As stated above, my initial entry into these debates concerning the nature of madness and how we comprehend it was greatly influenced by the work emanating from the high radicalism of the mid to late twentieth century. The figures of R.D Laing, Michel Foucault and Thomas Szasz laid the intellectual groundwork for a general questioning of psychiatry's place and purpose and, by implication, the way in which 'mental illness' has come to be constructed. Although the anti-psychiatry movement provided the initial impetus to forms of political, ethical and philosophical critique in respect of psychiatry's continued dominance over all things mad related, its popularity and credibility has dropped off considerably since the 1960's. My wish to establish the 'madness-writing' relation within the current Mad Studies paradigm necessitates an acknowledgement that Mad Studies has evolved out of this historical anti-psychiatry legacy and which perhaps takes its current form in the broader arena of critical psychiatry. As such, this literature review shall firstly provide a brief overview of what we mean by critical psychiatry and how Mad Studies fits with this area of research and praxis. Following which, I shall provide an

overview of what we mean by Mad Studies and how debates about the use of mad narratives or patient writing are central to its stated aims and commitment to emancipatory action. As will become apparent, however, this taught relation between madness and those who produce knowledge about it is far from new. In fact, it is a problem that is as old as philosophy itself, perhaps even a condition for it.

Moving from my discussions related to Mad Studies and the use of narratives of those with lived experience of madness, this literature review shall delve into this historical legacy proper. By using the well-publicised 'Foucault/Derrida' debate as a means to enter into the ways in which philosophy, literature and psychoanalysis have, historically speaking, consistently reformulated this central concern, I will demonstrate how the contemporary project of Mad Studies shares this age-old questioning of the way in which madness relates to culture, thought or philosophy. What shall emerge over the course of this literature review is the beginnings of a method for reading madness - a method which hopefully seeks to move away from the authoritarian ways in which psychiatry and other disciplinary practices have previously sought to overwrite or co-opt madness within differing intellectual frameworks. This method will then be tracked across my readings of the Schreber analyses, put to work in my own readings of Philip K. Dick's *Exegesis*, and then finally revised in my conclusion to establish a set of reading practices which allow for a reading of mad text that promotes a dialogue with it and does not seek some form of interpretative dominance.

## **1.2 Critical Psychiatry**

Whatever Mad Studies may or may not comprise, it undoubtedly finds itself firmly placed within an established precedent for widespread critiques of psychiatry, as well as more general attempts to re-think what it is we mean by terms like madness, 'psychosis' or 'schizophrenia'. In the tradition of anti-psychiatry, a loose theoretical, political and practice-based approach has emerged over recent years that is collectively understood as critical psychiatry and I would argue comprises

the broader terrain in which Mad Studies sits. Whilst remaining true to the ethos of anti-psychiatry in terms of a general questioning of psychiatry's place in current society, critical psychiatry is separated from its ideological forbearer in a number of different ways. Indeed, the worlds of psychiatry and mental health have undoubtedly changed since the high radicalism of the 1960's and in many respects the heterogeneous field of critical psychiatry has come to reflect the different elements that today make up the concept of 'mental health' and forms of treatment. All of these strands share the same essential qualities in that they contest the power of medicalised diagnostic psychiatry with its tendency to relegate forms of madness, 'psychosis' or 'schizophrenia' to mere psychopathology or forms of psychological abnormality.

As with its cultural and theoretical influence, anti-psychiatry, it is difficult to know where to begin in summing up the field comprising critical psychiatry. The term itself seems to have first been adopted by David Ingleby in 1980 with his collected edited work *Critical Psychiatry* which contained a number of writings contesting the then orthodoxy preached by medical psychiatry that mental illnesses were similar to any other illness and simply required alleviating via medical intervention. The volume contains chapters from Franco Basaglia (1980), the famous Italian psychiatrist largely credited with abolishing the asylum network in his native country, as well as psychoanalytic historian Sherry Turkle (1980) on the relevance of Jacques Lacan to anti-psychiatric positions; someone that shall come to be a familiar figure to us during the course of this thesis. In a much more recently edited volume entitled *Critical Psychiatry: The Limits of Madness* from 2006, David Ingleby returns to the question of 'what precisely is critical psychiatry?' He identifies the following elements that make up any critical psychiatry perspective. Firstly, he acknowledges the rift between positivist and interpretive approaches to mental health. As he states, "critical psychiatry is not so much directed against a biological approach to mental illness as against a one-sided *positivist* approach" (p.65). He goes on to add:

Critical psychiatry, therefore, does not regard mental illness as a 'myth'; rather, it insists that an emphasis on biological determinants must never blind us to the possible

human sense of people's behaviour and experience. This means *combining* positivist and interpretative approaches. An example of such a 'mixed discourse', in the view of the philosopher Paul Ricoeur, is psychoanalysis (p.67).

Straight away we see, therefore, how critical psychiatry is opposed to an over reliance on positivist framings of mental illness and how Ingleby, for one, sees Ricoeur's reading of psychoanalysis as a means to overcoming such a one sidedness. We will touch on Ricoeur's 'philosophy of psychoanalysis' later in this chapter. The second area of focus for any form of critical psychiatry worth the name is concerned with the power of psychiatry and its role in society. Here Ingleby highlights how the questioning of the social role of mental health interventions, and the way in which psychiatrists exercise their undoubted power, is a central theme to the field. In this respect, Ingleby writes:

the gist of the critique was that whereas mental health interventions are carried out in the guise of benevolence [...], to a greater or lesser extent they serve other interests: those of the profession, for example, or (more generally) those of social groups which have a vested interest in maintaining the *status quo* (p.67).

From this initial questioning of psychiatry's power and the positivist paradigm on which it is based come a whole host of interrelated positions.

Richard, P. Bentall (2004/2010) is one of the most prominent writers contesting an overly biological model of mental health and has provided popular and widely read critiques on the shortcoming of genetic theories regarding the causes of 'psychosis' and depression, as well as the widely held notion that mental disorders are diseases of the brain. Bentall, a psychologist by profession, finds support from others within his discipline who are promoting a general questioning of contemporary psychiatric practice many of whom are, likewise, writing from a British context.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bentall in his well-received works such as *Madness Explained: Psychosis and Human Nature* (2004) as well as *Doctoring the Mind: Why Psychiatric treatments Fail* (2010) has provided a thorough critique of psychiatric practice and in particular the triumph of the biological paradigm within which it now sits. Bentall describes three myths that circulate within psychiatry; the myth that psychiatric diagnoses are meaningful, that psychiatric disorders are genetic diseases and that mental illnesses are brain diseases.

Lucy Johnstone (2000) remains an outspoken advocate for many of the abuses that occur under the name of psychiatric treatment. Her co-authored *Power, Threat, Meaning Framework* (2018), recently published by the British Psychological Society, also represents perhaps the first attempt to provide a robust schema for dealing with states of mental distress that does not rely on the DSM model of classification.

Outside of critiques emerging from the world of clinical psychology, there are a number of practising psychiatrists who themselves are working towards overturning many of the falsehoods or discrepancies that exist within their discipline (see, for example, D. B. Double, 2006). Joanna Moncrieff, a practicing consultant psychiatrist within London, remains the foremost outspoken critic of the effectiveness of psychiatric medication and has tirelessly published a range of papers and books which not only question the efficacy of anti-psychotic and anti-depressant medication (2013) but also exposes the harm such psychiatric drugs can have particularly on long-term users (2007).

The discipline of social work has, to a lesser extent, also contributed towards the critical psychiatry position. Shulamit Ramon (2006) has advocated for a psychosocial approach within the context of British Mental Health Social Work and sees the profession as being in a potentially advantageous position in being able to further non-reductive, non-medical framings of mental health. However, she also rightly points to the barriers to this, with social workers in the UK being in a unique position following the implementation of the *Mental Health Act 1983* which affords social workers the specific task of assessing and detaining those deemed to be of high risk due to their mental state. This 'approved' status, combined with social workers' roles in 'sectioning' individuals, arguably contradicts any progressive influence they may have in the wider field due to the very coercive nature of this role and the proximity they have to psychiatry in undertaking it. It would perhaps be pertinent to state here from the outset that this is a role that I currently fulfil and although I would argue has little bearing on the course of this thesis, it does raise a fundamental question as to my stated political or ethical stance that I seek to align myself within. It is an issue I

shall return to at the end of this thesis following my excursion through mad writing and associated forms of theoretical production.

Psychology, psychiatry and possibly even social work provide some of the professional and disciplinary points of reference for the critical psychiatry field. However, remaining solely with professional or disciplinary references in attempts to provide an overview of this field undoubtedly leaves it one-sided and, ultimately, does not do justice to the core of the critical psychiatry project.<sup>3</sup> The reason for this is that whatever counts as critical psychiatry has to acknowledge the strong tradition and continued involvement of service user activists, those with lived experience of madness and the ongoing work of those outside professional settings to provide a counter to psychiatric power. Again, succinctly defining the psychiatric survivor movement is no easy task and it too has a long and diverse history. Set against the backdrop of the civil rights movement and the prevailing anti-psychiatry sentiment, the psychiatric survivor movement came into prominence with the publication of Judi Chamberlin's 1978 book, *On Our Own: Patient Controlled Alternatives to the Mental Health System*, which advocated for increased involvement of patients in their psychiatric treatment. By the 1980's, this movement began to shift in line with ideological forces such as Reaganomics and Thatcherism. As a result, many service user groups began to refer to themselves as 'consumers' who, instead of wishing to abolish the Mental Health system, argued instead for it to be expanded to offer a greater choice of treatments and support in line with patient preferences. Not long after its inception the psychiatric survivor movement quickly, therefore, became split between opposing political leanings, resulting in an explosion of different service led user groups across the globe.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> There is indeed a significant amount of research, commentary and critique of the psychiatric profession from across varied sections of society. Although beyond the means of this chapter to provide a full literature review, the following provide some of the touchstones for the contemporary critical psychiatry field from an Anglophone perspective: R. Whitaker (2010) *Mad In America*. New York: Basic Books; J. Davies (2012) *Cracked: Why Psychiatry is doing more harm than good*. London: Icon Books.

<sup>4</sup> An early instance from the British context may include the campaigning group 'Psychology/ Politics/ Resistance' formed in Manchester in the 1990's which included amongst its members the critical psychologist

Undoubtedly, one of the biggest and most successful examples of service user led groups and forms of organising would relate to the *Hearing Voices Network* which originates from the Netherlands.<sup>5</sup> The *Hearing Voices Network* has, since its inception in 1987, grown to become a leading international forum for those experiencing issues with their mental state, to form alliances and provide spaces to exist outside formal medical settings (Romme et al, 2011). In fact, numerous groups or networks exist across the globe, all of which are united by a common aim: to resist the power of psychiatry whilst providing alternatives through different forms of social interaction. In the US, the *Icarus Project* is perhaps the best established. The *Icarus Project* also produces zines and articles written by those who themselves have undergone forms of mental distress which represent instances of mad text. In 1993, an emergent campaigning group came together in Toronto, Canada and eventually morphed into what is now known as the 'Mad Pride' movement. Although originating from a Canadian context in response to local community prejudices against those with psychiatric involvement, it has since become an international movement seeking to reclaim the negative language used against those with experiences of the psychiatric power.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3 A New Paradigm for Studying Madness

Out of this loose grouping of forms of mad resistance has come an innovative area of cross disciplinary activity that is known as Mad Studies. As stated, this is a framework I am seeking a dialogue with in my examination of the interpretation of mad writing. This is because 'interpretation' is an issue that speaks to the core of the Mad Studies project but one that reverberates also with

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and Lacanian analyst, Ian Parker (see Parker, 2014). The group eventually dissolved into *Asylum Magazine* which remains one of the leading examples of service user led publishing and which also contains many examples of mad writing or 'psychotic' text.

<sup>5</sup> Credited with starting the 'Hearing Voices' movement, Marius Romme and his colleagues have published an account of 50 service user experiences of voice hearing and their individual processes of recovery which also represent instances of mad writing. See Romme et al (2009).

<sup>6</sup> In order to further contextualise 'Mad Pride' through more examples of mad writing, this time in the form of 18 autobiographical stories of individual's psychiatric treatment and subsequent involvement with the 'Mad Pride' movement, see Dellar et al (2003) *Mad Pride: A Celebration of Mad Culture*. London: Chipmunk Publishing.



much older philosophical debates of which Mad Studies is perhaps the latest articulation. But what do we mean by the term? Richard Ingram (2016) recognizes that he is often credited as the first person to have coined the term 'Mad Studies'. Following a period of unemployment from Ryerson University, Canada in 2008, Ingram began to think outside the confines of university life and to wonder about some of the limitations of disability studies as a space to do research on this thing called madness, as well as 'mad people'. Ingram, whilst incorporating the work of those researching mad people's histories, such as Roy Porter (referenced above) and his own colleague David Reville, soon started to problematize the way in which thinking about madness was often contained under the overarching and governing concept of disability. Madness, for Ingram, required a slightly different paradigm for undertaking research and he introduced the idea of thinking about madness as distinct from the broader notion of disability, specifically framing it as Mad Studies later in 2008 at Syracuse University during a Disability Studies Symposium.

For Ingram, Mad Studies was something separate to the study of disability as it required the production of knowledge alongside those labelled mad. Ingram cites various historical examples of people doing Mad Studies and in particular the figure of Frederick Nietzsche who, he states, was writing about his own struggle with madness from within his own philosophy. Ingram references a number of other Nietzscheans who, he believes, also speak to this production of knowledge in tandem with their own madness; figures such as Bataille (1988; 1988b; 1989); Blanchot (1993; 1992; 1995); Klossowski (1997) and Deleuze and Guattari (1972; 1980), all of whom provide 'launching points' (2016, p.120) for Ingram's idea of Mad Studies. The reason being is that the knowledge produced by this diverse set of thinkers incorporates some maddening quality to their writing. Mad Studies from its inception was concerned with the production of knowledge and the inclusion of some form of madness within it. It is, as Ingram (2016) has later described, about making sense and making (non)-sense together; it is about bringing nonsense or the extra discursive back into academic language and writing. Drawing on the influential text *Mad at School* (2011) by Margaret

Price, Ingram also acknowledges that disability studies, with its focus on bodies as opposed to minds, was an insufficient paradigm for investigating forms of mental distress.<sup>7</sup>

Speaking alongside Jijian Voronka, the 2008 Syracuse talk laid out what Ingram believed to be an emerging discipline or rather *in/discipline* for thinking through and with madness. By this he meant that whatever Mad Studies was evolving into, and has perhaps since become, it was both intended as a distinct discipline and alternative non-discipline. It was intended to draw from within the academy and forms of intellectual research but, simultaneously, to be free of these professional and intellectual constraints that have often served to whitewash what it is we mean by madness. This form of *in/discipline* speaks directly to the inclusion of madness in the production of knowledge about it. Only by moving beyond the walls of the academy could Mad Studies truly incorporate the voice and experience of those labelled mad and ensure that Mad Studies did not just become another reiteration of well-intentioned academics or researchers effectively creating another system of meaning or language about them. In keeping with this, prominent Mad Studies figures, Jan Russo and Peter Beresford query, in respect of previous well-meaning attempts to theorise madness, “why approaches that at first seem inviting and like they might even help to disrupt psychiatric control over our voices, ultimately resort to marginalising mad peoples own knowledge” (2015, p.154). Mad Studies directly engages with this problematic and seeks to ensure that it does not marginalise mad people whilst constructing forms of knowledge about them.

Over the ensuing years what was initially conceived within this Canadian context rapidly grew and reached into different areas across the globe. However, as Peter Beresford (2016) acknowledges, “international interest in and the visibility of Mad Studies increased greatly with the

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<sup>7</sup> In fact, there is an established literature that problematizes the conflating of madness and disability. Forms of mad pride and proponents of mad positive approaches, in general, challenge the view that madness is in itself inherently disabling and is, therefore, unable to form a constructive foundation from which claims to identity or knowledge can be derived. For further discussion on the normative nature related to disability judgements, as well as the political implications of mad pride activism in respect of this conflation with disability, see, M. A. Rashed (2019) “In Defence of Madness: The Problem of Disability” in *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy: A Forum for Bioethics and Philosophy of Medicine*. Volume 44, Issue 2: p. 150-174.

publication in 2013 of *Mad Matters*” (p. 9). *Mad Matters* (2013) is in many respects the inaugural text for the entire Mad Studies project and brings many of its disparate elements into one focal point. Edited by Brenda, A. Le François, Robert Menzies and Geoffrey Reaume, the text collects numerous essays and papers from those working under the Mad Studies moniker. The world’s first reader in Mad Studies aimed to share the experiences of those operating from within the Canadian context and those who identify both as survivors and researchers. Its impact was felt internationally. Several courses have since commenced both inside and outside universities within Europe. In September 2014, the first UK ‘Mad Studies Stream’ was convened in Lancaster University during the International disabilities Studies Conference, which was followed by two further events. In 2015, Durham University also held the ‘Making Sense of Mad studies’ conference where Ingram was invited as Keynote Speaker. It is against this vibrant backdrop of thought and action, contained under the rubric of Mad Studies, that my own attempts at research were first being formulated. This project, unwittingly at first but no doubt explicitly so later, has been influenced directly by this backdrop of ‘mad activity’.

Lucy Costa (2014), a Canadian survivor/activist has provided a useful definition of Mad Studies on the Mad Studies network site. It reads as follows:

an area of education, scholarship, and analysis about the experiences, history, culture, political organising, narratives, writings and most importantly, the PEOPLE who identify as: Mad; psychiatric survivors; consumers; service users; mentally ill; patients; neuro-diverse; inmates; disabled – to name a few of the ‘identity labels’ our community may choose to use (Costa, 2014, n.p).

The editors of *Mad Matters* similarly describe Mad Studies as:

a project of inquiry, knowledge production, and political action devoted to the critique and transcendence of psy-centred ways of thinking, behaving, relating, and being (Le François et al, 2013, p 13).

These loose definitions speak not only to my earlier comments about the political or ethical framing of this project but also to the way knowledge is produced alongside madness. We note in Costa’s

definition that the place of mad narrative and mad writing is also central to Mad Studies stated focus. My intention to analyse the ways in which mad writing has been utilised to produce theory starting with Schreber and then moving to my own enquiry with PKD's *Exegesis* finds an intellectual home with the Mad Studies project. Yet it is important to remember that Mad Studies seeks to open up the idea of madness beyond strict academic focus. The question as to how this mad analysis may be performed allows us the opportunity now to delve further into some of the debates circulating within the Mad Studies project and ones that are of the utmost relevance to my own stated research aims.

#### **1.4 Who is the Knower and Whose Knowledge Counts?**

Maria Liegghio (2013) argues within the *Mad Matters* reader that the process of psychiatrisation, or rather the way in which the 'psy-discourses' (Rose, 1998) of psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis not only create the mad subject but also deny those with lived experience their voice and "ultimately, their very existence as legitimate knowers" (p.122). Liegghio finds the concept of epistemic violence a particularly useful idea for exploring the ways in which psychiatry associated professions, as well as academic researchers, effectively overwrite the knowledge, feelings, thoughts and experience of those who have undergone forms of mental distress or what we also term 'madness'. Their experience is often reformulated by medical jargon, expert terminology or abstract theoretical models that serve to do some form of violence to their subjective, personal meaning. The idea of epistemic violence, as Liegghio states, refers, "to the ways certain persons or groups within society are disqualified as legitimate knowers at a structural level through various institutional process and practices" (p.123). This harks back to the patient I encountered on the locked ward some years ago and the way in which his 'mad knowledge' was being disqualified due to his medicalised 'schizophrenic' status. This is precisely the epistemic violence of which Liegghio writes. More broadly, Russo (2016) highlights how mad narratives or first

person accounts of those with lived experience of madness “have become an object of increasing interest for non-survivor scholars with backgrounds in psychology and psychiatry” (p.215) and how “by assigning the tasks of understanding and making meaning of madness to ‘experts’ and not those directly concerned, the great majority of narrative analyses perpetuate the role and power divisions central to psychiatric treatment” (p.216). Enacting forms of ‘epistemic violence’ in the context of research on mad narratives appears to be a central concern from within the Mad Studies project.

Lieghio has adopted this term ‘epistemic violence’ from postcolonial studies where it was first formulated. Gayatri Spivak (1987) posed the question in the late 80’s, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, asking whether colonised people can ever formulate ways of knowing and, by implication, ways of being that are not denied by institutional and historical processes that delegitimize their worldviews in favour of oppressive forms of knowledge and power.<sup>8</sup> Voronka (2016) highlights how critical scholarships such as post-structuralist, postcolonial and feminist theory have explored the “possibilities, limits, and conditions of relying on experiential knowledge, and debated both the advantage and risk of relying on lived experience and identities to pluralize knowledge” (p.190). A substantial part of the Mad Studies project is then directly engaged with this problem and asks how those with experience of madness can ever maintain their own forms of knowing. Beresford and Russo (2015) develop the idea of epistemic violence in line with Miranda Fricker’s (2010) work, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. For Fricker, epistemic injustice refers to the way in which someone is wronged specifically in their capacity as a ‘knower’. Beresford and Russo argue that “epistemic injustice could thus be a very helpful framework for those faced with the uphill task of making the case for first-person knowledge of madness and distress” (2015, p.155).

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<sup>8</sup> This debate on who is allowed to speak for whom forms part of the wider crisis in representation which took hold within the humanities and beyond towards the end of the twentieth century. Following on from the figure of the postcolonial subject, the relevance of the concept of epistemic violence has been opened up to include many different subject positions (subaltern, disabled, queer, racialized, diasporic) and has been instrumental, as Voronka (2016) states, in its ability to have “critiqued the ways in which scholarship had historically been produced on them – rather than with or from them” (p. 190).

They deftly outline the inherent issue that researchers, like myself, face when attempting to take the experience of others and utilise it for research purposes. They write:

It may not be the intention of the scholars without such first-hand 'outsider' experience who undertake research on narratives, to take them over, but there do seem to be serious risks of this happening. Then what might have been intended as a challenge to traditional epistemic inequalities and exclusions could actually act to reinforce them. How do we avoid this happening and creating new kinds of exploitation and inequality? What might ethical principles and methodologies for such work look like? (p.156).

The risk of scholars without first-hand outsider experience taking over narratives is particular apt to my situation. I cannot make any claims to any outsider status, having had no first-hand experience of 'psychosis' (that I am aware of) and, whilst working within statutory mental health services, in many respects I am as 'inside' as one could get. My research project, as stated, is explicitly about the way in which narratives are utilised to form knowledge and I am proposing to perform my own analyses on a mad text. Beresford and Russo's (2015) caution here to not reinforce epistemic inequalities is one I should take seriously. Whatever methodology I am working towards must engage with this central issue. Yet, the more we strip away at the different layers and nuances of this concern, the more complex it becomes. Is it so easy to devise a clear demarcation between those with lived experience and those without? Between the inside and the outside? And what are the implications of doing so?

Jijian Voronka (2016) identifies the inherent problem of taking 'lived experience' of madness, something that has traditionally been referred to as survivor research, and essentializing it to ensure that it becomes the bedrock of any subsequent intellectual endeavours. As she writes:

I argue that using 'people with lived experience' as a form of strategic essentialism to unify our divergent ways of making meaning of our experiences to enact political gains holds risks. These risks include undercutting our various differences by effacing interlocking oppressions and the different ways we experience madness, conflating our conceptual and ideological standpoints as universally shared, and reifying mental illness (p. 190).

The issue here is that 'lived experience' can serve to overwrite very real differences between those who identify as mad and can ultimately serve paradoxically to re-establish a kind of privileged site from which some are allowed to speak and others not. The risk of reifying madness to ensure that it becomes a protected category that only certain individuals or groups are allowed to access effectively means that it becomes closed off and a potential hierarchy of oppression can again take hold. To the best of my knowledge I have no lived experience of madness but does this mean that I can never speak of it or about it? And perhaps more importantly, what are the actual criteria for stating one has authentic lived experience? If madness is a constantly shifting entity with no agreeable limits or definition (an idea we will explore further below) then surely one person's 'lived experience' can not only be vastly different to another's but potentially contradictory. As Voronka (2016) further states, "Dangers when we strategically essentialize lived experience include whitewashing how madness lands and is graphed onto bodies" (p.197). This is precisely the point I wish to emphasize. Essentializing 'lived experience' runs the risk of once again overwriting madness to fit into a collective understanding of what the term means. Voronka goes on to write:

Experience happens, but how we as individuals make sense of them matters, because it informs the ways in which we set research priorities, our frameworks for meaning-making, how we collect, analyse, and interpret knowledge, and how we work through notions of truth in our own knowledge production (p.197-198).

In order to conclude this review of the Mad Studies project, and this set of debates within it, I want to close by venturing into some of the ways in which those within Mad Studies are proposing to do research that work through notions of 'truth in our production of knowledge'. Crucially, these are ones that do not run the risks highlighted above of overwriting mad people's experience, essentializing such experience or indeed reinforcing forms of exploitation and control that are such a familiar theme of intellectual work conducted on mad narratives or first-person accounts.

## 1.5 Narrative and Dialogical Research

We turn again now to Jan Russo (2016) whose work on narrative research and the possibility of engaging in dialogue with mad narratives is invaluable to my attempts to formulate a position from which I can ethically engage with analyses of 'psychotic' text. In revisiting the area of narrative studies, particularly those that pertain to the fields of psychiatry and mental health more broadly, Russo focuses in on what she terms, borrowing from Mike Oliver (2009), the 'social relations of research production'. The relevant issue here within such 'social relations' is Oliver's assertion that the research task of meaning making must always be shared. Once again, Russo acknowledges the many pitfalls researchers have previously made when they take first person accounts of madness as research material. In her review of some of the most prominent examples of research on first person accounts she concludes that:

Despite the vast differences in the analyses they undertake, what most of these papers have in common is the uninhibited way that their researchers turn publicly accessible survivor work into *data* for analysis (p.217).

Russo is here asking whether mental health narratives can ever be treated like any other research document, journal article or published work especially when consent is rarely sought. The issue at stake is one of narrative ownership. Russo also draws on the work of Smythe and Murray (2000) who define this quite simply as "the issue of who has control over the presentation and interpretation of research participants' narratives" (p.312). In order to highlight this problematic dynamic, Russo analyses one of the more infamous attempts to utilise narratives emanating from the experience of mental health service users. The piece of research in question is Sue Estroff's 2003 paper *Subject/subjectivities in dispute: The Politics and Poetics of first-person narratives of schizophrenia*. Estroff (2003), when discussing the utilisation of such experiences from the consumer/survivor/ex patient (C/S/X) movement within psychiatry (what is also referred to as the psychiatric survivor movement), argues that her motivation for analysing such narratives was that:



The inclusion of c/s/x experiences as legitimate subjects and subjectivities worthy of study, serious examination, and inclusion in the science of schizophrenia would challenge brain-based paradigms, but is not of necessity incompatible (p.299).

It is this passage that is so telling for Russo and one that highlights the central issue in well intentioned researchers utilising mad narratives for their own ends. In direct response to the Estroff quote above, Russo writes:

Leaving aside the issue of the 'compatibility' of survivor knowledge with the biomedical model, what remains overlooked here are the questions of whether psychiatrised authors should be 'seriously examined' further as *subjects* and whether we at all want our *subjectivities* to be integrated into the (apparently objective) 'science of schizophrenia.' That translation, interpretation, and appropriation of our experiences are inherent in such undertakings remains unspoken (p.220).

For Russo (2016), Estroff has already, perhaps unknowingly, shaped the account with the 'science of schizophrenia'- a term that is itself hugely contested and politically loaded. I include this debate between Estroff and Russo as just one small example of the way in which those within Mad Studies are problematizing researchers' attempts to perform analysis, and therefore derive knowledge, from first person accounts of madness. Following on from this example, Russo's further examination of similar types of research endeavour leaves her to conclude that perhaps the most common factor amongst them all is that there is seldom any direct contact between the researcher and those who have authored such mad narratives. Again, I want to quote Russo at length here as she provides one possible means to overcoming this much cited problem. She questions:

How to generate a research account that includes the authors/participant's own understanding of their experience and brings it into dialogue with other author/participant's and the researcher? Such an undertaking requires alternative approaches and methods because it fundamentally questions the conventional division of roles and assignment of authority in psychiatric and mental health practice and research. Nevertheless, I am convinced that work of this kind does not have to stop at a 'descriptive' level. On the contrary, such joint undertakings have great potential to deepen and expand the understanding of complex human experiences – like madness- in a way that

cannot be achieved by a single researcher who claims sole interpretive authority (2016, p.222).

The answer seems clear: include the authors of such narratives in the joint production of the research account, thereby blurring the line between researcher and researched. Rather than treating authors as research subjects, by collaborating and incorporating their understanding into research practices we may help to avoid whitewashing their experience and committing forms of epistemic violence. However, we might want to pause here to remember that my stated aim is to undertake research on a body of mad writing penned by an author deceased for over 30 years. Clearly any opportunity to engage in dialogue with PKD and jointly construct research together is a non-starter. Does this, however, mean that this concern for constructing dialogue with the author is altogether lost? Are there ways in which I can still behave ethically as a researcher in respect of mad narratives without necessarily authoring the research in tandem with Philip K. Dick? I believe there is and I base such a belief again on comments circulating still within the Mad Studies literature. Once again these emanate from Jan Russo, who highlights the work of Canadian Sociologist, Arthur Frank (2000) and his writing on what he refers to as 'dialogical research'. In fact, Russo so strongly believes in the ability of dialogical research to overcome inherent pitfalls relating to research on mad narratives that she boldly states, "In my opinion, any attempts to shift dominant social responses to madness and create viable alternatives to its medical treatments must rely on a dialogical methodology" (2016, p.225). Again, we should question what Russo is referring to here in respect of Frank's dialogical research. To quote her and Frank at length, she writes:

So what does a dialogical approach mean concretely? For one thing, it involves giving up aspirations to interpretive dominance and understanding interpretation as an "ongoing dialogue with the story" (Frank, 2010, p.104). It means that the analysis does not position itself outside or above the dialogue but aims "to open continuing possibilities of listening and of responding to what is heard" (2012, p.37).

Dialogical research is foremost concerned with ensuring that no final analysis is achieved but rather an opening or enlargement of knowledge about a narrative that is done so in co-production with the narrative itself. Frank himself states the following about his innovative research technique:

Within a dialogical relation, one person can never say of another, 'This is who such a person *is*.' One can say, at most, 'This is how I see this person now, but I cannot know what she or he will *become*.' Dialogue depends on perpetual openness to the other's capacity to *become someone other* than whoever she or he already is. Moreover, in a dialogical relation, any person takes responsibility for the other's becoming, as well as recognizing that the other's voice has entered one's own (2005, p.967).

Russo directly adopts this tactic in her own work on mad narratives and it is something that informs my own research. The issue of an author's 'becoming' in respect of another's (researcher's) dialogue with them is something that reverberates with how I have undertaken this project. I have borrowed from Russo extensively as her work provides a reflexive and ethical way forward. My project represents a deviation away from perhaps the usual narrative research undertaken in strict psychologic or medical science knowledge production. There is an undoubtedly much stronger literary focus to the mad writing I am focusing in upon. Yet I ascertain that this dialogical approach, with a commitment for avoiding interpretive dominance, a focus on the interrelation between researcher and researched, as well as the understanding that no final analysis is ever arrived at but rather an open system of 'becomings', can be transplanted into the reading method I shall employ on PKD's exegetic writing. Before reviewing more closely the different examples of mad narrative that make up the broader arena in which this project sits, I want to give the final word to Jan Russo whose work has so helped inform my own. She writes:

By focusing the narrative analysis on the dialogue and interplay among diverse perspectives rather than on discrete individual accounts, we can disrupt the static role division between the researcher and the researched. In its place, space opens up for the co-creation and enlargement of knowledge (2016, p.225).

In sum, although my project is essentially aiming to perform different analyses on the writings of a now famous author, and where question marks still remain as to his alleged madness, I maintain that the Mad Studies field is a fruitful one for examining the way in which knowledge is produced

from 'psychotic' text. I very much wish to retain the spirit of this Mad Studies project as we go forward but also seek to move beyond these debates centred on epistemic violence and dialogical research. Although they provide a solid foundation on which to construct and critique methods of interpretation, I am aiming to build upon them via my own review of the Schreber material and subsequent reading of PKD. Although the author I am analysing can have no direct influence on my final results, I also aim to ensure that I remain open to what PKD is telling us and that, by doing so, a space is opened up for the creation of knowledge between this project and his body of writing. Before moving on to the final part of this literature review it is necessary that I highlight the wider terrain in which PKD's writing sits. Although his writing is rarely, if ever, strictly referred to as a mad narrative or an example of 'psychotic' text, my project is effectively aligning it with a rich tradition of patient narratives, asylum writing, memories of psychiatric illness and many other instances of madness being committed to script. It is worth surveying some of the more prominent examples of mad writing that have surfaced over the years.

### **1.6 Establishing a Field of Mad Writing**

Trying to establish a field of mad writing is hampered by the many different separate domains or traditions in which it has been collated, documented or indeed celebrated. So much so, that no real agreed identifiable field could rightly be said to exist. Yet, there are particular sites, archives and published anthologies which do comprise the beginnings of such a field. As an aside to my own particular project, consideration could, and perhaps should, be given to a more formal consolidation of mad writing as a distinct area of enquiry in its own right. Unlike its close cousin, 'Outsider Art' (or what is also known as 'Art Brut') which details the artistic expression of 'schizophrenics' and inmates of psychiatric asylums, mad writing has no central institution or easily identifiable body of research underpinning it. Whereas Outsider Art holds a rich history (see Wojcik, 2016; MacLagan, 2009) and has been collated in prominent galleries such as the *Prinzhorn collection* in Heidelberg, Germany, the *Collection de l'art brut* in Lausanne, Switzerland and, to a lesser extent,

the Maudsley Museum in London, mad writing lacks a distinct unified research area and is often tagged onto other projects or examples of artistic expression emanating from asylum life or therapeutic practice. Although archives based at the *Prinzhorn collection*, as well as digital archive at the Wellcome Trust in London, undoubtedly contain many examples of writing produced by ‘psychotic’ or ‘schizophrenic’ subjects, it does not appear that writings produced by the mad have had the same cultural impact as the paintings, drawings and sculptures undertaken by such famous ‘schizophrenics’ or mad artists such as Henry Darger and Richard Dadd. A current research project headed by Matt Ffychte at the Department for Psychosocial Studies, University of Essex, in tandem with the University of Chicago’s Neubauer Collegium for culture and society, may go some ways to rectifying this.<sup>9</sup> We should also note that any attempt at consolidating mad writing into a distinct field will have to grapple with the issue of where those writing from within the bounds of traditional literature, who themselves may have maintained a relationship to some form of personal madness, would sit. The history of literature is replete with mad authors whose own idiosyncratic relation to language, thought and emotional life was greatly touched by experiences or states of mind which could quite easily fall into a psychiatric framework.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, much of the modernist literary landscape, to pick just one area of the literary world, is populated by figures who famously harboured forms of madness that have been reworked into their writing. From Virginia Woolf to

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<sup>9</sup> More information relating to this project can be found at:

[https://neubauercollegium.uchicago.edu/faculty/outsider\\_writing/](https://neubauercollegium.uchicago.edu/faculty/outsider_writing/) . The outsider writing project, with its stated aims of investigating how certain forms of textual production by those deemed ‘mentally ill’ fall inside or outside of culture, has brought together a series of symposia and one international conference. The project intends to build an international network following the archiving and sharing of such outsider writing with a view to the establishment of a permanent centre for these forms of textual output.

<sup>10</sup> The madness and literature field undoubtedly has a long and rich history. Although there are many different entry points into this field, the “Madness and Literature Network” provides a particularly useful resource for working through this. It can be accessed <http://www.madnessandliterature.org/aims.php> . In addition, Baker et al (2010) *Madness in Post 1945 British and American Fiction* provides a useful Anglo-centric overview of representations of madness in a wide-ranging works of fiction.

James Joyce and many others besides, madness has been a key trope and source of personal experience with which to pen any number of famous literary works.<sup>11</sup>

A good starting point would be medical historian Roy Porter (1996), who collected an anthology of mad writing and its place within evolving conceptions of mental illness entitled *A Social History of Madness*. Porter draws our attention to what is often regarded as the first example of autobiographical writing in the English Language, *The Book of Margery Kempe* (2005), who many have suspected was suffering from some form of ‘schizophrenic’ illness. Indeed, this initial example of autobiographical writing within the English language from the 16th century charts Kempe’s spiritual life after she began seeing visions, entertaining a close relationship with god and undergoing intense bouts of weeping. Kemp’s autobiography in fact instigates a long tradition of women documenting their psychological turmoil and experiences of madness that have, in turn, been co-opted into a narrative that places psychological illness and femininity in close proximity. Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s (1892) *The Yellow Wallpaper* and the origins of Freud’s (1901) psychoanalysis in the form of his *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, are called upon by Porter to advance his argument that conceptualisations of madness have, historically speaking, often found themselves drawing from, or being applied to, particular examples of women’s experience. In fact, of the very few anthologies of mad writing that exist, it is notable that one of them is entirely focused on instances of female writing. *Out of her Mind*, edited by Rebecca Shannonhouse (2000) continues this tradition and documents many other notable writers who have committed their lived madness to script. This includes the writings of New Zealand author, Janet Frame, in particular her *Faces in the Water* (1961), as well as portions of *The Bell Jar* (1963) by Sylvia Plath and *Girl Interrupted* (1993) by Susanna Kaysen.

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<sup>11</sup> A further exploration of the link between modernist literature and tropes of madness is undertaken in J. C. Farrell’s (2000) *Paranoia and Modernity* which argues that paranoia is a primary concern in modern literature, and common themes relating to grandiosity, suspicion, unfounded hostility, delusions of persecution and conspiracy are common psychological facets of the modern hero.

One notable account of an individual's documented experience of 'psychosis' that is not included in Shannonhouse's collection is Barbara O'Brien's (pseudonym) (1958) *Operators and Things: The Inner Life of a Schizophrenic*, which charts O'Brien's schizophrenic experience and subsequent journey across the US during the 1950's. O'Brien penned the account as she travelled through various States whilst all the time believing that she was being coerced, or indeed controlled, by unseen beings that used humans to further their own ends in an elaborate system of power struggle and monetary exchange. Porter is quick to point towards the parallels within American society, in particular the political economy of 'organisation man' running throughout O'Brien's text. This startling paranoid account concludes with O'Brien seeking the assistance of a psychoanalyst who proves to be entirely ineffectual, whilst also enforcing a dominant patriarchal world view onto O'Brien in an attempt to cure her - a world view as propagated within the workplace and structures of corporate America that may well have been a factor in O'Brien's initial 'breakdown' and resultant 'schizophrenic' delusion.<sup>12</sup> In the end, O'Brien finds relief from the malign influence of these 'operators' through the act of writing itself, a therapeutic practice that is able to calm her mind and allow her to return to psychic stability. This is an important theme that resurfaces across the entire course of this thesis.

Returning to the various historical examples that Porter highlights, there is one particularly famous account that has specific relevance to the later findings of my project. It is also one that can perhaps lay claim as the sole rival of Schreber's *Memoirs* in terms of the wide reception and critical commentary it has received. The case concerns James Tilly Mathews and his infamous 'Air Loom'. Mathews was a London tea-merchant who, having visited Paris in the late eighteenth century, became familiar with mesmerism - a belief system in a form of animal magnetism that had the

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<sup>12</sup> This issue of an individual's madness in some sense reflecting prevailing socio-historical themes via their paranoia is explored to great effect in Laura Murat's (2011) *The Man Who Thought He Was Napoleon: Toward a Political History of Madness*. Murat examines how cases of particular historical events or traumas, such as the French revolution and the returning of Napoleon's remains to Paris, became interwoven within the content of an asylum patient's delusional beliefs. This intertwining of madness, history and political theory is an idea that we will return to in the context of Schreber's delirium and the political themes of that particular period.

power to control and influence others and one that had some bearing on the origins of psychoanalysis. Freud famously found Anton Mesmer's work of interest and his earliest work with Breuer and Charcot drew on the potential for mesmeric forms of hypnosis to alleviate certain maladies or afflictions. Whilst in France, Matthews became embroiled in the escalating political crisis with England and attempted to mediate with the governments at the time. Upon his return to England he accused the government and House of Commons of treason, referencing various conspiracies he believed were being directed against him. He was soon after committed to the Bethlem psychiatric hospital where he then began to experience a series of delusional beliefs pertaining to a criminal syndicate known as the 'Air Loom Gang' who, he believed, were tormenting him by the use of an 'influencing machine' which, via magnetic rays, were directly controlling his body. His treating physician at the time, John Haslam, in an attempt to prove his patient's clear insanity allowed for various first-hand accounts of Mathews' experience to be published. The rather curiously titled, *Illustrations of Madness: Exhibiting a Singular Case of Insanity, And a No Less Remarkable Difference in Medical Opinions: Developing the Nature of An Assailment, And the Manner of Working Events; with A Description of the Tortures Experienced by Bomb-Bursting, Lobster-Cracking, and Lengthening the Brain. Embellished with a Curious Plate* was published in 1810 and is often positioned as the first full length study of a patient's singular description of the symptoms of 'paranoid schizophrenia'. In tandem with Roy Porter's assertion that Mathews' delusional writing underscores the political tension present during his 'ravings' about an 'Air Loom', the work of Mike Jay (2017) similarly contextualises Mathews' instance of mad writing to great effect. Mathews' book has undoubtedly been well commented upon within the world of psychiatry (see Carpenter, 1989) yet has also been taken up within the psychoanalytic cannon, most notably by Victor Tausk in 1919, whose *On the Origin of the "Influencing Machine" in Schizophrenia* documents the common place experience by many 'psychotic' patients of an unknown machine or external force that is able to exert control over their actions and direct their bodily movements. Again, this idea of Tausk's is something that I shall return to during the course of this thesis.



The place of mad writing holds particular importance within psychoanalysis' theorisations and formulations concerned with 'psychosis' and 'schizophrenia' to make no mention of various neurotic complaints and its own elaborations on hysteria. Although the trajectory documented within this thesis is primarily concerned with the case of Daniel Paul Schreber, there exist various other examples of mad writing within the psychoanalytic tradition that have been called upon to further theoretical understandings and forms of treatment. One particularly famous example is the case of Renee, with an accompanying discussion and theorisation by Marguerite Sècheyaye, Renne's Swiss psychoanalyst, at the hospital where Renee was confined. Renee's (Sècheyaye, 1951) *Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl* charts her retreat from socially shared reality into what she terms the 'land of Enlightenment', whilst all the while suffering the adverse effects of a 'system' that alters and transforms her perceptions. Through the sustained attention, care and understanding of her analyst, Renee is able to recover and finally leave the hospital in which her 'psychotic' experience was penned. Contrary to O'Brien's experience, psychoanalysis in the form of Sècheyaye's rather unorthodox approach is able in this instance to relieve Renee's suffering.<sup>13</sup>

One last anthology or collection of 'psychotic' text worth mentioning relates to John, G. H. Oakes' (1991) collected volume *In the Realms of the Unreal. "Insane Writing"* with an introduction by Kurt Vonnegut (who himself is no stranger to mad writing with his own son having penned his own account of 'schizophrenic' experience (Vonnegut, 1975)). Oakes' collection contains a large selection of prose and poetry from those deemed to be mad, most of who were resident in various institutions or asylums at the time of their textual production. Ranging across the last century and numerous different geographical areas, the collection possibly represents the first attempt at documenting and publishing numerous instances of mad writing from previously unknown

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<sup>13</sup> Further connections are to be found between Sècheyaye's method of symbolic interactionism and the later theoretical underpinnings to this project via the work of Ferdinand Saussure, the structural linguist who greatly influenced the work of Jacques Lacan. It was Sècheyaye and her husband who in fact provided the first English translations of his work.

individuals, patients or authors. Whereas the celebrated works of mad authors such as Nikolai Gogol or Antonin Artaud have received much critical focus, *In the Realms of the Unreal* offers the chance for unknown and essentially hidden writers to showcase their art and represents a valuable archive of unusual, revealing and downright challenging writing derived from ‘psychotic’ experience. Examples included within the volume are drawn from the Prinzhorn collection as well as psychiatric institutes throughout Europe and the US. They remain unanalysed with no accompanying commentary or analysis.

Within the emerging field of mad writing is a particularly well-known resource; Gail Hornstein’s (2011) *Bibliography of First Person Narratives of Madness in English* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.) details over 600 autobiographical texts that take madness as their subject matter. Ranging across three centuries and numerous national, cultural or geographical contexts, this resource does not come without its own problems. Indeed, the entry requirements for inclusion in the bibliography are relaxed at best, resulting in a huge range of quality, stretching at times what may count as madness or ‘psychosis’. Hornstein has attempted to position herself as a leading academic on first person accounts of madness, yet beyond the cataloguing of these accounts, the research conducted by her on this bibliography or indeed any of the titles within it remains somewhat underdeveloped.<sup>14</sup>

Far more valuable work on the place of mad writing has been undertaken by Angela Woods, co-director of the ‘Hearing the Voice’ project, an interdisciplinary research project on voice-hearing based at the University of Durham and supported by the Wellcome Trust. Woods (2013) engages

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<sup>14</sup> If we return to our earlier discussions circulating within the mad studies literature we find Hornstein and her colleagues falling foul of the much-discussed issue of utilising mad narratives to further academic research. Jan Russo (2016) critiques Hornstein’s (Adame & Hornstein, 2006) analysis of ten personal accounts of madness published as books between 1908 and 1995 and concludes that despite the author’s wish to “provide an alternative to medical conceptions of mental illness” (Adame & Hornstein, p.137) instead, “through the acts of overwriting, grouping, and renaming experiences, this approach diminishes the authority and power of the first-person voice that the authors gained through their own publications. The analysis imposes a new and controlling narrative” (Russo, 2016, p.221). Despite Hornstein and her colleague’s intentions to resist the master psychiatric narrative they appear to Russo, at least, to have essentially reproduced a taxonomy of mental distress and have overwritten such personal experiences committed to script.

with mad text most notably with her review of *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, a periodical largely stemming from a medical psychiatric perspective that has been in circulation since 1969. Each edition contains on its final pages a short piece of writing written by a 'schizophrenic' patient detailing their experiences and often their forms of treatment. Woods, in her comprehensive review, discovers that from all of these many instances of patient testimony, only one article appears to have been written by a subject undergoing a 'psychotic' experience at the time of writing. All the rest treat their 'psychosis' as a historical event and, likewise, seem for the most part to be supportive of their psychiatric treatment which assisted in overcoming such experiences.

One last important area not yet covered in respect of mad writing is the impact that such texts or examples of 'psychotic' script can have on the reader and perhaps literature in general. Although this remains a relatively minor area of focus, Evelyn Keitel's (1989) *Reading Psychosis: Readers, Texts and Psychoanalysis* remains the most thorough going treatise on the structure of 'psychotic' writing and its impact on the reader. Keitel attempts to instate a new literary genre termed the 'psychopathographic' which concerns the incursion of pathological states or rather 'psychotic' dissolution into contemporary literature. The central issue pertains to the much cited issue of how such borderline human experiences can be represented through language. In a sense this new literary genre takes as its object of study those texts which seek to portray or represent that which exists beyond language, beyond the limits of verbalisation. Keitel's study aims to identify what are the specific formal features, narrative strategies and perspectives adopted by such texts in their attempt to relay an experience that lies beyond comprehension. Furthermore, Keitel moves on to determine that some of the emotional effects that potentially characterise 'psychotic' states, (pleasure/paralysis/ misperception/estrangement) are engendered in the reading process itself. Drawing from 'reader-response theory' Keitel asserts that a sense of oppression and discomfort often accompanies the act of reading psychopathographies and that this reading process, which responds to the formal structure of the text in question, is perhaps one of the key markers of

psychopathographic texts. The main thrust of Keitel's study is therefore an attempt to provide an overarching schema to this extremely heterogeneous genre. In doing so, she classifies these mediating texts into three distinct subgroups, each with its own formal features: the theoretical, the literary and the imitative. She concludes by stating that the narrative strategies already mentioned above contain a combination of pleasure and unpleasure, resulting in the reader experiencing a primary emotional state aligned to the basic structure of 'psychotic' phenomena.<sup>15</sup>

We have then a diverse area or emerging field which takes mad writing as its object of study. Furthermore, the Mad Studies literature that I opened this chapter with is explicitly problematizing the way knowledge is produced in such an emerging field and does so by effectively asking whether the language of the mad, in this case the written form, can ever be enclosed by theory or the exercise of knowledge due to its unique status. Mad Studies may well be the most prominent area of scholarship and service user activism that questions this very manoeuvre; yet I want now to demonstrate how these central concerns pertaining to the relation between madness, writing and knowledge are far from new. In fact, when it comes to thinking about them via the practice of philosophy we find that such concerns may well be as old as the exercise of thought itself. The place of madness within philosophy has long been a central issue. Plato, for instance, writing in his *Phaedrus*, explicitly praised four states of madness (the poetic, the prophetic, the telestic and the mystical) and concludes that they all grant man access to the realm of the unseen, a kind of esoteric knowledge. We note already from the classical philosophy of antiquity how madness, a form of veiled or hidden knowledge and the place of writing (the poetic) are all placed in close alignment. This juxtaposing of these elements threads its way through western philosophy and I want to turn to this now in order to situate Mad Studies within this philosophical legacy; one that inevitably brings us to the issue of methodology. I shall enter into this examination of madness, writing and knowledge via a much-publicised debate between Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida who, in

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<sup>15</sup> In a similar vein to Keitel, the very recently published *Mad Muse: The Mental Illness Memoir in a Writer's Life and Work* by J. Berman (2019) explores the challenges of reading such work and demonstrates that mental 'illness' is often intergenerational whilst the stories about such 'illnesses' are intertextual.

many respects, have already done the historical examination of this interrelation for us, and who essentially set out the theoretical terrain in which we can incorporate the concern for method above within the larger arena of continental philosophy.

### **1.7 The 'Foucault/Derrida' debate**

In 1961, Michel Foucault published his first major work, the *Histoire de la Folie*, to widespread critical acclaim. This profound and comprehensive study of madness propelled Foucault onto the intellectual scene and was the first in a series of archaeological analyses that established him as a major force within contemporary European thought. Two years later, Foucault's one-time student, Jacques Derrida would deliver a speech at the College Philosophique, entitled *Cogito and the History of Madness*, questioning the very foundations on which his former mentor's project was built. The central issue pertains to the historical significance Foucault affords to Cartesian conceptualisations of madness in relation to reason. What followed was an acrimonious philosophical debate, resulting in neither party speaking directly for a decade. Following Foucault's untimely death, and in the midst of his one-man assault upon structuralism and metaphysics, Derrida would bring a degree of closure with his last published engagement on the subject by re-examining the debate, not through Cartesian philosophy, but rather through insights attributable to Freud. As will become apparent, psychoanalysis will provide a major touchstone to this project, both as a source for constructing differing forms of clinical and cultural theory, as well as providing a specific reading practice.

Foucault's (2006) project charts the changing nature of madness as represented through political, artistic and philosophical means. Beginning in the Middle Ages he traces the political economy of madness through to the classical age - the so-called age of reason - and demonstrates how madness is constructed, confined and silenced according to the social relations at any given time. In so doing, Foucault wishes to emphasise how contemporary understandings of madness as

an object of scientific enquiry - an object relegated to a deviation from medical normality - are but the latest incarnations of the place of madness within the social order. By releasing madness from the constraints of scientific knowledge, Foucault is able to assert that madness is far from a static entity occupying the same space throughout history, but rather a constantly shifting presence determined by the socio-political context in which it resides. In his efforts to summarise the overall objective of the project, he states - "the object, that is, is to write not a history of knowledge, but the rudimentary movements of an experience. A history, not of psychiatry, but of madness itself, in all its vivacity, before it is captured by knowledge" (2006, p.xxxii). The relation between madness, knowledge or reason runs through the core of Foucault's project and elevates it above a simple chronological account concerned with the changing attitudes towards madness throughout European history. In a much cited quote from Foucault, he again attests as to how his project is not simply a historiography of insanity as determined through prevailing systems of knowledge, but rather a history of madness itself independent of such systems, a history yet to be written and as such characterised by a strange silence: "the language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason *about* madness, could only be founded on such a silence. My intention was not to write the history of that language, but rather the archaeology of that silence" (ibid. p.xxviii). Madness, language and reason, therefore, become inevitably interwoven throughout Foucault's project.

In keeping with Foucault's assertion that his intention was to divorce madness from the systems of language that constrain it, Shoshana Felman writes that Foucault's "main object – and the challenge of his study – is to contend that anthropology, philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, are built upon a radical misunderstanding of the phenomenon of madness and a deliberate *misapprehension* of its language" (1975, p.209). She goes on to claim that Foucault's wish is to demonstrate how the "entire history of western culture is revealed to be the story of reason's progressive conquest and consequent repression of that which it calls madness" (ibid, p.209). Madness, language and reason become inexorably intertwined throughout Foucault's book and in

order to re-evaluate the means by which he constructs his project we can trace his movement through three distinct narratives (Boyne, 1990): firstly, the 'political economy of madness' concerned with the initial displacement of leprosy as the principle form of symbolic Otherness in the medieval ages, through to the 'Great Confinement'; secondly, 'Madness in art and literature' by which Foucault engages with the works of Bosch, Brueghel and Durer through to Cervantes and Shakespeare; and lastly, the 'Science of Madness' whereby (psychiatric) knowledge comes to capture madness transforming it into a 'mental illness.'

The book begins by Foucault situating madness in and against that other great socially excluded entity from the medieval period - leprosy. Foucault lays bare the techno-administrative apparatuses present throughout Europe at the time, designed explicitly with the intent to separate the leper from ordinary society. For Foucault, the leper comes to serve as the Other of the medieval social order and the figure of the 'lazar house' serves as the material demarcation or exclusion of leprosy from medieval society. However, in the wake of leprosy's decline or 'strange disappearance' in the seventeenth century, "something new appears in the imaginary landscape of the renaissance; soon it will occupy a privileged place there: the ship of fools, a strange 'drunken boat' that glides along the calm rivers of the Rhineland and the Flemish canals" (2006, p.8). In effect, the function that the leper served as society's Other now comes to be replaced by this ship of fools, "*Stultifera Navis*." Whereas madness had previously existed on the fringes of the European imagination, representing something both quasi-religious and mysterious, it is now re-inserted into the dynamics of political control. A corresponding reorganization of financial and economic infrastructure throughout Europe also sought to separate out those deemed incapable of contributing towards the market economy. The result was a new-found figure of 'Otherness' that took its place alongside the vagrants, the criminals and the poor, condemned to newly constructed institutions designed to separate them from the social body. This 'great confinement' saw madness interned into houses

such as the general Hospital in Paris and it was not until great reformers such as Philippe Pinel and Samuel Tuke that madness would once again re-enter the popular landscape.

This movement whereby madness becomes separated or reorganised within the European imagination is reflected for Foucault in its changing status, as depicted in the artistic products from the medieval period through to the renaissance. The paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Brueghel and Durer are examined by Foucault and conform to the representation of madness as a source of constant threat, a vision of moral decrepitude waiting to endanger the social order. Importantly, madness is seen during this period as a threat contained within the prevailing social dynamic and is yet to be relegated to a different realm. Foucault spends considerable effort on analysing, *The Ship of Fools* and *The Temptation of St Anthony* by Hieronymus Bosch as well as Brueghel's *The Triumph of Death* and Durer's *Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. In so doing, he attests as to how such works of art "concede, and perhaps in a certain sense celebrate, the existence of madness and unreason in *this world*" (Boyne, 1990, p.21). Painting from the medieval age through to the renaissance still depicts madness as something contained within communal human experience. Foucault then goes on to stress that madness, as written in Shakespeare's *King Lear* or Cervante's *Don Quixote*, still maintains a relationship to reason as it is presented as a form of 'willed downfall' and as such, is reversible or redeemable. Following the 'Great Confinement', a two hundred-year silence falls upon artistic representations of madness and it is only with the actions of Tuke and Pinel that madness is reinserted into the literary landscape through the works of Goya and the Marquis de Sade.

Finally, Foucault draws attention to the place madness comes to occupy in respect of science. Following the 'Great Confinement', a corresponding force emerges which sought to understand the causes and characteristics of those deemed insane. The result is the newly established medical science of psychiatry, with its methods for diagnosing and treating those confined to the madhouses noted above. From this moment on, madness becomes the preserve of psychiatric knowledge. No longer simply a form of moral degradation or quasi-mystical insight,



madness becomes a mental illness to be assessed, treated and cured like any other medical aberration. In short, “the effective outcome of this was to be the de-sacralisation of madness and the cementing of the nexus between reason and power” (Foucault, 2006, p.29), a nexus that would come to characterise Foucault’s archaeological analyses for years to follow. I want to return, however, to the central point within Foucault’s project that provided the source of contention with Derrida - the so-called ‘Great Confinement’ - whereby madness was excluded from the social order and interned into a network of asylums. This, for Foucault, marks a definitive break in the place madness comes to occupy within the social field. For this physical confinement to occur, however, a wholesale reordering of social space (and its corresponding economic infrastructure) necessarily required a philosophical counterpart. That counterpart, or philosophical moment, whereby madness is expelled from a society now founded upon the unquestionable legitimacy of reason is found in the enlightenment philosopher *par excellence* - René Descartes.

### 1.8 The Cartesian Exclusion

In a kind of preface to a chapter from the *History of Madness* entitled ‘The Great Confinement’, Foucault locates Descartes’ (1968) *Meditations* as that point of departure whereby madness is radically excluded from reason, resulting in the physical exclusion or internment of those deemed insane. Descartes’ aim in the first meditation is to radically question all previous assumptions and opinions in order to arrive at an indisputable foundation of knowledge; his famous philosophical *method*. In order to arrive at such a foundation, Descartes (1968) identifies three possible reasons for doubt or uncertainty. They correspond to: (1) a possible ‘errors of the senses’ (2) the ‘unreality of dreams’ and (3) the ‘illusions of the mad’. The importance of this distinction for Foucault’s reading is the relationship the first two uncertainties have in respect to truth that the third, ‘madness’, does not. Foucault draws attention to Descartes’ assertion that in the case of errors of judgement, a relation to truth is still maintained as it is only in respect to things ‘very far away’ or ‘very small’ that such an error may likely occur. Likewise, in the case of dreams, although the content

may be otherwise bizarre, some relation to truth must be preserved through the manner by which the dream is experienced in terms of colour, shape or size. In effect, the laws of mathematics and geometry still apply as he states that, “even if I am asleep, two and three together always make five, and a square never has more than four sides” (1968, p.98).

However, truth completely dissolves in the case of the last form of doubt - the illusions of the mad. Nothing can be taken as a certainty in this instance and Descartes goes beyond both sensory and non-sensory experience to question the metaphysical foundations of all knowledge with his hypothesis of an even more radical delusion - the possibility that all of his experience is directed by an evil malevolent god, an evil genius (*Malin Génie*). How can Descartes attest to any form of foundational truth in such an instance whereby all the certainties he has previously established are but deceptions brought about by such a God? In effect, Descartes posits such a ‘total madness’ as the antithesis to any form of foundational knowledge. Foucault’s specific point is that madness is, therefore, afforded an entirely different relationship to truth and reason than other forms of uncertainty. In his treatment of such uncertainties, as one commentator notes, Descartes announces, “that he would be no less extravagant than the mad themselves if he were to follow their example and imagine that he were made of glass.” Thus, instead of finding something in the thought of the mad that could not be false, Descartes effectively declares that “*I who think cannot be mad*” (Boyne, 1990, p.46). Foucault emphasizes how madness is set up in direct contrast to thinking or the exercise of reason. From this moment on the Cartesian Cogito, the thinking subject, excludes any possibility of being mad provided we employ Descartes’ two unshakable certainties: “that he exists as a thinking subject (*ego cogito ergo sum*) and that God exists as a supreme power and perfection” (ibid. p.41). Foucault locates this specific historical/philosophical moment as the point by which madness becomes philosophy’s Other, the moment it is radically excluded from a world of shared meaning.

### 1.9 Cogito and the History of Madness

For Derrida (2001), his critique is twofold. Firstly, he challenges Foucault's reading of Descartes' *First Meditation* and the historical significance he affords it; and secondly, he queries the general logic of Foucault's concept of reason. Ultimately, Derrida questions the very possibility of writing such a history of madness as by doing so, Foucault is essentially repeating the very manoeuvre he purportedly wants to avoid. Derrida takes as his point of departure three pages from the 673-page book and alleges in typically audacious style, "that the sense of Foucault's entire project can be pinpointed in these few allusive and somewhat enigmatic pages" (ibid, p.37). As is often the case with Derrida's close textual reading, he takes one small passage from a text he believes indicative of the entire project and submits it to close scrutiny unearthing the hidden assumptions or falsehoods. The passage in question is Foucault's interpretation of the Cartesian exclusion. Derrida objects to his interpretation on the grounds that Foucault believes that Descartes expels madness from reason thereby engendering a relationship of exteriority between the two. For Derrida, however, madness is contained within the very dynamics of reason, within philosophy itself. As he writes, "the Cogito escapes madness only because at its own moment, under its own authority, it is valid *even if I am mad*, even if my thoughts are completely mad" (p.55). Madness and reason, in a sense, condition one another and encounter each other in a self-envelopment. For Derrida, hyperbolic doubt and the cogito itself cannot be evoked without that central kernel of madness characterised as an excess interior to reason. Derrida goes still further when he claims that contrary to Foucault's understanding of madness as being exterior to philosophy or reason, it is in fact the possibility of its very condition.

In keeping with this Cartesian exclusion which Foucault describes as central to the passage from the renaissance to the classical age, Derrida focuses in upon Foucault's claim to wish to write a *history of madness itself*, prior to its taming by classical knowledge. The contradiction for Derrida is that Foucault sets about such a project by utilising the very language that was initially sought to capture madness. As Derrida states, "the expression 'to say madness itself' is self-contradictory. To

say madness without expelling it into objectivity is to let it say itself. But madness is what, by essence, cannot be said: it is the 'absence of the work' as Foucault profoundly says" (p.51). Later, in a similar vein, he adds, "if a discourse and philosophical communication (that is, language itself) are to have an intelligible meaning, that is to say, if they are to conform to their essence and vocation as discourse, they must simultaneously in fact and in principle escape madness...By its essence the sentence is normal" (p.65). Derrida is here questioning the very possibility of writing such a history, as in order to do so one must employ reason as expressed through systems of language, thereby imprisoning madness. Essentially, one cannot use reason to express or represent that which, by its very definition, is not *reasonable*. Derrida does not state that Foucault is unaware of such an impossibility and instead insists that Foucault, at certain points, acknowledges this very problem. However, Derrida's specific point is that Foucault repeats this objectification through his practice rather than his formulation. In other words, "because the silence cannot be spoken without at the same time re-captivating it within *logos* – the language of objectification – Foucault gives expression to it through his *pathos*, by means of his new and radical silent praise of folly" (de Ville, 2010, p.20). Derrida's critique takes on an added level of complexity as he employs a distinction between *logos* and *pathos* within Foucault's work. Later, when re-examining Foucault's intention to pinpoint the precise moment when madness is divorced from reason, Derrida further problematizes Foucault's use of the Greek *logos* as an example of what a 'non-exclusionist reason' might look like. Foucault originally states that:

The Greeks had a relation to something that they called *hybris*. This relation was not merely one of condemnation; the existence of Thrasymachus or of Calicles suffices to prove it, even if their language has reached us already enveloped in the reassuring dialectic of Socrates. *But the Greek Logos had no contrary* (my emphasis) (2006, p.xxix).

It is this employment of *logos* as proof of some original state of 'non-exclusionist reason' that Derrida objects to. Derrida finds this bothersome as he states that the reassuring nature of the Socratic dialectic can only be brought about by a Greek *logos* that "has already expulsed, excluded,

objectified or (curiously amounting to the same thing) assimilated and mastered as one of its moments, 'enveloped' the contrary of reason" (2001, p.47). So, whereas Foucault utilises the notion of the Greek *logos* as an example of a historical epoch whereby reason was not separated from its Other (a *logos* with no contrary), Derrida wishes to show, in fact, that the Greek *logos* itself was characterised by its own envelopment of reason's opposite. The problematic relations of interiority and exteriority are shown to be present long before Foucault's claim that it was only in the classical age that madness became separated from reason.

Foucault delivered his reply to Derrida and the wider world in 1972, although did not address in full Derrida's criticisms but instead contained his thoughts to Derrida's notion of reason and his reading of Descartes' meditations. We can summarise his position as a critique of Derrida's attempts to reduce discursive practices (and Foucault's overall analysis) to a purely textual reading.<sup>16</sup> In highlighting his belief that such a reduction closes off various avenues for thought and the exercise of philosophy, we touch upon perhaps the greatest difference between both thinkers; whereas Derrida's maxim, '*il n'y a pas d'hors texte*' ensures that the debate is reduced to its textual representation, Foucault's emphasis on discursive limits potentially frees up the text from its immediate social, political or philosophical reading. In an attempt to outline the differing positions, we may wish to turn to Slavoj Žižek's (2007, n.p) summation - when wading into the debate he declares that both thinkers:

"share the key underlying premise: that *Cogito* is inherently related to madness. The difference: for Foucault, *Cogito* is grounded in the exclusion of madness, while, for Derrida, *Cogito* itself can only emerge through a "mad" hyperbole (universalized doubt), and remains marked by this excess. Before it

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<sup>16</sup> In his reply, *My Body, This Paper, This Fire*, (2006) Foucault expands on this to state, "we can now see the price that Derrida must pay for his clever hypothesis. The omission of a certain number of *literal* elements (which appear as soon as one makes the effort to compare the Latin text and the French translation); the elision of *textual* differences (the whole play of semantic and grammatical oppositions between the paragraph on dreaming and the paragraph on madness); finally, and above all, the effacing of essential *discursive* determination (the double weave of the exercise and the demonstration)" (p.569).

stabilizes itself as *res cogitans*, the self-transparent thinking substance, *Cogito* as a crazy punctual excess.”<sup>17</sup>

In short, one position maintains that madness is the excluded necessity of reason whilst the other purports that madness is in fact contained within reason, an excess at the very core of language or philosophy. We should, however, resist possible temptations to announce definitively that one party has ‘won out’ against the other and instead read Derrida’s critique as a sharpening of Foucault’s initial project. In effect, Derrida is able to augment Foucault’s interpretation and by following his re-reading of Descartes, we arrive at a notion of madness as that which engenders philosophy and reason in their actuality. Whereas Foucault wished to emphasize how a scission came about in the classical age divorcing madness from reason, Derrida radicalises this notion to encompass all of history. Or in other words, “Derrida argues that this escape from madness is not the product of a determinate moment in history, it is rather that which opens history, and speech in general” (Flynn, 1989, p. 209).

On first glance, the above debate presents a significant challenge to a project that takes the written expression of madness as its object of study. Following Derrida’s critique, we may question the possibility that madness can be represented in language at all. On closer inspection, however, we come to see that madness as such is not perhaps exterior to discourse, philosophy or history, but is in fact, its inherent possibility. Madness exists as a paradoxical interior excess to philosophy itself. This, I would argue, has direct implications for the Mad Studies project. By positioning madness as something that is central to the exercise of thought we might side step some of the more hostile attitudes to mad narratives ever being utilised for academic purposes and what’s more, it potentially aligns with an ethico-political aim of ensuring madness, or the mad themselves, are not relegated to the edges of culture at large. There is already, providing we follow Foucault and Derrida’s line,

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<sup>17</sup> This quote is taken from the online article entitled *Cogito, Madness & Religion. Derrida, Foucault and then Lacan* which can be found at: <https://www.lacan.com/zizforest.html>. Žižek further argues in this that “madness is inscribed into the history of *Cogito* at two levels. First, throughout the entire philosophy of subjectivity from Descartes through Kant, Schelling and Hegel, to Nietzsche and Husserl, *Cogito* is related to its shadowy double, *pharmakon*, which is madness. Second, madness is inscribed into the very (pre)history of *Cogito* itself, it is part of its transcendental genesis”.

something inherently maddening about the exercise of thought or the production of knowledge. Mad writing may exist at the very core of philosophical practice. The question now is how one reads it. By what means do we approach this 'mad hyperbole'? The work of Shoshanna Felman (1975, 1978) in direct relation to the above debate offers us one possible avenue - one that foregrounds the literary as a possible 'buffer zone' between madness and philosophy.

### **1.10 Felman, Literature and the Possibility of Reading Madness**

In keeping with the earlier distinction between *pathos* and *logos* Felman questions whether literature can act as the medium by which we can come to *know* madness. This literary theme is picked up by both Foucault and Derrida when Felman states that they would both likely agree that "the only possible meeting between madness and philosophy, between delirium and thought" (1975, p.220) is contained within fiction. Foucault himself engages with a number of literary figures within his project such as Sade, Artaud, Nerval and Hölderlin, and Felman asserts that this engagement speaks to the *pathos* of Foucault's project - a *pathos* that Derrida rightfully locates as the means by which Foucault's book can in fact speak of madness without repeating the so-called 'Cartesian gesture for the twentieth century'; i.e. without trapping madness within the linguistic structures of reason. Felman goes as far as to state that "literature could very simply serve as a transparent intermediary between madness and philosophy; it could indeed succeed in *saying* madness *inside* philosophy" (1975, p.223). We may ask how is it then that literature can succeed where philosophy cannot? Because, in keeping with Foucault's analysis, Felman goes on to declare that madness is "pathos itself, a metaphor of pathos, of the unthought residue of thought" (1975, p.224). Essentially, Felman draws a vital distinction for us in the quest to *know* madness. If we attempt to divine a *concept* of madness we are forever doomed to repeat the problem of trapping madness within reason. However, the possibility of knowing madness through *metaphor* is the method by which one can speak of madness without such a necessary entrapment. It is this distinction between *concept* and *metaphor*, or between *logos* and *pathos* that I believe speaks to the

heart of the debate. Furthermore, if we adopt this strategy of differentiation we can see how Foucault and Derrida are not necessarily opposed to one another but are in fact circling the same central concern through differing readings of Descartes.

As an example, let us turn to Felman's own deconstructive analysis of Gerard de Nerval's (1855) *Aurelia* in order to appreciate how metaphorical operations or specific narrative structures are able to evoke the figure of madness without the problematic of ensnaring it within Logos. Felman in fact begins by juxtaposing *Aurelia* against Foucault's *History of Madness* by emphasising how both writers adopt a romanticised use of poetic language within modern discourse. Drawing from the debate and Foucault's intention to define the relationship between reason and madness - without reverting back to a "unilateral monologue of reason *about* madness" (1975, p.62) - Felman evokes the impossibility of the task that Foucault set himself but nevertheless attempted. This notion of the impossible book (*History of Madness*) is in keeping with Nerval's *Aurelia*, which was likewise proclaimed by its author to be an impossible endeavour. Why? Because Nerval also understood that he could not write his own experience of madness without in some way constraining it by reason and formal language. Felman - via Nerval - here opens up the question of 'possibility' in any autobiographical writing of madness. How can that excess or contrary to reason be depicted in literary form? Felman goes on to show how Nerval raises another question or point of departure for thinking through the writing/madness binary. As she asks is not every reading in some sense aligned to a kind of madness "since it is based on illusion and induces us to identify with imaginary heroes? Madness is nothing other than an intoxicating reading; a madman is one who is drawn into the dizzying whirl of his own reading" (p.64).

Returning back to the so-called 'impossible task', Felman demonstrates how Nerval's poetic enterprise resembles, to an astonishing degree, the philosophic enterprise of Foucault's. Both attempt the impossible; to *say* madness itself and to return to that zero point before madness is divorced from reason. Felman moves on to unpick the literary techniques based within a romantic



discourse that Nerval adopts to say madness independent of medicalised or reductive scientific language. The chief operation that enables Nerval to do so is by dividing his sense of self, by evoking a plurality of the “I”. The pronoun “I” in this instance takes on a complex characteristic within *Aurelia* as it stands for both the hero (madman) and the narrator (he who has recovered reason). To further complicate affairs, these two “I’s” exist in different temporalities (the hero’s madness is present; the narrator reports after the event). This constant contrasting of one against the other is replete throughout *Aurelia* with both “I’s” coming to assume one position against the other (absolute knowledge versus ignorance, strength versus weakness, sanity versus delirium). The entire structure of *Aurelia* is shown to be based upon “an irresolvable tension between these two contradictory discursive tendencies in the narrative” (p.67). This contrasting of one “I” against the other gives subsequent form to the ‘Hero-I’s’ further hallucinatory splitting into another, or a double. Felman, however, utilises this figure of the double and demonstrates how this ‘Other-I’ can be read within “a radical dimension of castration” as elaborated within Freud’s notion of the ‘uncanny’ (p.68).<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, *Aurelia* comes to be defined by this constitutive experience of castration. Following which, the text is further unpacked to show how hallucinatory phenomena within Nerval’s account are related to the functioning of symbols or Nerval’s ‘magic alphabet’. In conclusion, Nerval’s madness, as contained within *Aurelia*, is shown to consist of “madness as a transgressive knowledge” and a quest for a magic language conditioned by phallic omnipotence. Nerval returns back from madness - the abandonment of this magic language - as Felman states, through a process of writing, “while the hallucination had been a reading of signs, a deciphering of one’s reality, writing will attempt, in contrast, to decipher one’s own dream. The writer thus becomes the reader, the interpreter, of his own madness” (p.76). Felman deftly shows us not only how madness can come to be embodied in literary form through an appeal to pathos, but how the use of psychoanalytic theory

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<sup>18</sup> Freud’s 1919 paper *The Uncanny* describes the psychological experience of encountering something that is strangely familiar. Freud in his examination of this strange mental space explores the works of E.T.A. Hoffman and in particular his short story *The Sandman* which revolves around the presence of a double or doppelgänger.

can also provide the means to reading madness and arriving, in this case, at something approaching a clinical interpretation of Nerval. If we turn back to Derrida's later reflections on the debate we can strengthen the case for utilising psychoanalysis as a means for reading mad texts.

### 1.11 The Unconscious

Derrida (1994) re-engages with the debate in his lecture *"To Do Justice to Freud": The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis* where he reassesses the possibility of Foucault's book not through the prism of the Cartesian cogito but rather the Freudian unconscious. In speaking of Freud, Derrida claims that he was instrumental in ushering in "a new epoch of madness, our epoch, the one out of which is written the *History of Madness*" (p.235). Following which, he goes on to state that psychoanalysis represents a significant break with the classical age as, in contrast to enlightenment pre-occupations with reason, it attempts to reinsert unreason - the unconscious itself - into any such discussion. In effect, psychoanalysis "breaks with psychology by speaking with the *Unreason* that speaks within madness" (p.237). Psychoanalysis, for Derrida, comes to represent something altogether different from the previous Cartesian model of reason, as its object of study (the unconscious) does not conform to the measures of reason that Descartes holds as being central to the free-thinking subject. The unconscious, in this instance, problematizes the very notion of the Cartesian cogito (whereby conscious thought guarantees one's existence) due to psychoanalysis's claim that a large part of our existence is in fact determined by unconscious thought or psychic process.

In order to make this claim, Derrida evokes the guise of the Evil Genius and attempts to correlate numerous facets of psychoanalysis with Descartes' malevolent god. In a sense, Derrida draws a comparison with that hypothetical source of uncertainty (the evil genius) and Freud's (1920) own theoretical accounts for human behaviour that do not conform to an expression or exercise of rational thought, namely the death drive or the compulsion to repeat as formulated in *Beyond the*

*Pleasure Principle*. The classical age, an age marked by the use and centrality of reason, is upended by a theoretical body of knowledge that seeks to place conceptual categories that do not conform to reason at the heart of human experience and understanding. As such, an entirely different relationship to madness is potentially made possible. In commenting further on this, Derrida states that Freud (as well as Nietzsche) represents the “reopening of the dialogue with unreason, the lifting of the interdiction against language, the return to a proximity with madness” (p.250). Our relation to madness, and by association the possibility of Foucault’s project, has to be completely rethought in the so-called age of psychoanalysis. By re-opening the door to allow unreason back into the human condition, madness can no longer occupy that excluded place that is solely determined by its exterior relation. Unreason (of which madness was previously constructed) now holds central importance for human experience. We have then two possible sources, or two possible lines of enquiry, by which we can potentially *know* madness. *Pathos* as expressed through art and literature, and psychoanalysis, which reopens a dialogue with madness by dethroning the sacred place of reason with the entirely *unreasonable* unconscious.

What I am approaching here is the bare bones of a conceptual apparatus with which I can formulate a possible method of reading (and interpreting) written madness. The use of *pathos*, as embodied in literature, and its encounter with psychoanalysis provides the terrain on which a possible reading may be constructed. What remains to be clarified is how exactly psychoanalysis can be operationalised on literary forms in order to construct an interpretation or body of theory. Undoubtedly, psychoanalytic literary criticism has a long and varied history with numerous examples of how concepts such as the unconscious can be utilised for specific critical reading practices.<sup>19</sup> However, arguably the main current within it has its starting point not with Freud but with a critique

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<sup>19</sup> Psychoanalytic literary criticism remains one of the more contentious ways in which psychoanalysis has been applied outside of clinical settings. As Stephen Frosh (2010) states, “psychoanalysis has always been controversial as a method of literary analysis, particularly amongst writers and critics who regard it as a colonising discipline trying to tell the ‘truth’ of literature without necessarily appreciating its specificity, including its aesthetic properties” (p.70). Likewise, Shoshana Felman (1982) draws attention to the way in which psychoanalysis often subordinates literature as an object of language to be known which in turn valorises psychoanalysis as the authoritative framework for achieving any understanding.

of political economy. I am referring here to the work of Louis Althusser, the French philosopher largely credited for establishing a structuralist reading of Marxist theory and the materialist dialectic.

### 1.12 Althusser & Symptomatic Reading

Althusser advances a notion of 'symptomatic reading' primarily within his celebrated book *Reading Capital* (2009). Essentially, he constructed a method of reading that he found *in* Marx, and subsequently used it to then *read* Marx. In his own words he states that such a strategy "divulges the divulged event in the text it reads, and in the same movement relates it to a different text, present as a necessary absence in the first" (2009, p.29). It is then a way to discern how a text is structured or shaped by dynamics that they themselves do not deploy, as well as being a method for interpreting symptoms *within* the text that are conditioned by dynamics which lie *outside* of the text. Its focus, as a reading method, is on moments of contradiction, or the apparent lapses, gaps and lacunae that appear in the text but speak to something external; a larger structuring force that is only detectable by examining the ways it is *silently* in operation. It is worth quoting Althusser at length here. He writes:

Certain moments, in certain symptomatic points, this silence emerges as such in the discourse and forces it against its will to produce real theoretical lapses, in brief blank flashes, invisible in the light of the proof: words that hang in mid-air although they seem to be inserted into the necessity of the thought, judgements which close irreversibly with a false obviousness the very space which seemed to be opening before reason. All that a simple literal reading sees in the arguments is the continuity of the text. A '*symptomatic*' reading is necessary to make these lacunae perceptible, and to identify behind the spoken words the discourse of the silence, which, emerging in the verbal discourse, includes these blanks in it, blanks which are failures in its rigour, or the outer limits of its effort: its absence, once these limits are reached, but in a space which it has *opened* (2009, p.95).

Althusser, in his reading of Marx's *Capital* argues that Marx's text is conditioned by an antagonism between his own take on capitalist logic and that of the classical political economists (Ricardo, Smith). As such, this incommensurability or competing dynamic comes to the fore in the guise of specific lacunae within the text's meaning. Simply put, Marx and the classical political economists

are talking about two different things; or in Althusser's terms, they are dealing with two different 'problematics'. The problematic, for Althusser, is his name for the ideological or theoretical framework that situates or positions any given form of knowledge, concept or term. He reasons that any word or term cannot be considered in isolation and must be regarded in relation to the framework that forms the conditions of possibility for the production of knowledge. The problematic is not, however, a world view or an expressive totality, "It is not the essence of thought of an individual or epoch" writes Althusser, "which can be deduced from a body of texts by an empirical, generalised reading; it is centred on the *absence* of problems and concepts within the problematic as much as their presence: it can therefore only be reached by a symptomatic reading (*lecture symptomale*)" (2009, p.354). We can see, therefore, how the notion of symptomatic reading is intimately related to his concept of the problematic. By focusing on such absences, Althusser is able to argue that Marx's text is written within the problematic of the logic of capital, whereas those texts of the classical political economists are conceived within a problematic that is pre-capitalist. This in turn conditions those blanks, absences and failures in the flow of Marx's own analysis. What is made visible in Althusser's reading of *Capital* is a rupture between these two different logics.

We may ask how this relates to the use of psychoanalysis, as discussed above, in the interpretation of texts. Although symptomatic reading is undoubtedly indebted to Marxist theory, it also draws significantly from Freud, in particular his analysis of dreams. The concepts of 'overdetermination' as well as 'latent and manifest content' play a crucial role in this respect. By trying to discern the relation between what is absent and what is present, between surface level and depth, Althusser employs Freud's theory on the manner by which manifest dream content is related to latent meaning. However, a word of caution is required here as many critics have noted that such a simplistic division between these two unconscious phenomena (manifest and latent content) potentially results in an attempt to rewrite a text according to some hidden latent meaning that is used as a master code to interpret a higher truth residing behind or within the text. In fact, Freud

himself explicitly warns his readers against sticking rigidly to this binary. He states in the *Interpretation of Dreams* that “it has long been the habit to regard dreams as identical with their manifest content; but we must now beware equally of the mistake of confusing dreams with latent dream-thoughts” (2001, p.580). What is of absolute importance is the operation that transforms the latent dream image into its manifest content, an operation Freud referred to as the ‘dream-work’. It is this specific dynamic that opens up a window onto the operations of the unconscious, not the two polarities by which a dream can be separated. In devising such an operation, Freud had to surrender any idea of a one-to-one causality between these two concepts. In the place of a strict causality he puts forth his notion of ‘overdetermination’. Overdetermination - with the attendant dynamics of condensation and displacement - is the means by which many multiple meanings can be derived from one single dream sequence. The overdetermined nature of the dream results in it being repeated many times over (potentially infinitely) within different associative chains, resulting in certain meanings, as produced through repetition, taking on a coherence of their own. This coherence, however, must not be taken as an expression of the whole of the dream. It is this emphasis on the interaction between multiple layers of meaning as created by the overdetermined nature of the dream-work that is of crucial importance to Freud’s overall logic.

One other important concept employed by Althusser to advance this notion of symptomatic reading is that of the ‘epistemological break’. It is borrowed from the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1938) as found in his *La Formation de l’esprit scientifique* and describes how a break is required to move from one set of established ideas to another. Bachelard employs it whilst mapping the shift from the world of pre-scientific ideas to that of the scientific. This shift requires a radical rupture from the whole pattern and frame of reference of prescientific (ideological) notions and the construction of a new pattern or problematic. Peter Hallward encapsulates this when he states that “Science can only begin with a principled *break* with experience and ‘sensory knowledge’, a *rupture épistémologique* that enables a rational, self-rectifying explanation of problems that are not given in

or even accessible to lived experience, however 'intimate' or 'authentic' its phenomenological elucidation might be" (2012, p.11). This notion of a break or rupture is quite evident in other stands of French philosophical thought including, amongst others, Canguilhem's and Foucault's, the latter of whom was directly taught and influenced intellectually by Althusser. Althusser applied this notion of the epistemological break to his reading of Marx to demonstrate how Marx's rejection of the Hegelian and Feuerbachian ideology of his youth represented a rupture that was able to instate the science of historical materialism. We have then a set of interrelated concepts that Althusser employs to advance his strategy of symptomatic reading.

Certainly, symptomatic reading has a much richer conceptual history than the brief overview of Althusser's practice I have covered. Two other notable theorists who have played an important part in the construction of symptomatic reading include Paul Ricoeur (1970) and Fredrick Jameson (1980). The first primarily advanced such a reading practice in his *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (1970). In it, Ricoeur demonstrates how Freud's model of interpretation is particular suited to symbolic language, a language defined by Ricoeur as one "where another meaning is both given and hidden in an immediate meaning (p.7), the symbolic function of which ensures that this language comes to "mean something other than what is said" (p.12). This leads Ricoeur to put forward his notion of what he coined a "hermeneutics of suspicion" - a method describing an understanding of double meaning based not on an exegetic model of religious interpretation but rather a demystification of illusion; illusions which structure reality and texts therein. The second theorist, Fredric Jameson (1980), elaborates his mode of interpretation within *The Political Unconscious*, published not long after Althusser's and Ricoeur's own analyses. Jameson argued that by only attending to the surface of the text, the resultant critique will be largely descriptive, empirical, ideological and, therefore, in terms of analysis, weak. In contrast, the 'strong' critic must, he argues, rewrite the narrative in terms of master codes, revealing its status as ideological and, furthermore, as an imaginary resolution of real contradictions. Similarly, to Althusser, Jameson views

the text as constructed by an absence, but unlike Althusser, Jameson holds that there is only ever one absent cause: history itself.

Symptomatic reading, in its various forms, provides a framework and set of reading practices for analysing and interpreting texts, ones that are based on a demystification of surface level phenomena or linguistic symbols. But what of psychotic texts? Do these tools for uncovering latent meaning and deep unconscious structures suffice for analysing texts which are, on the surface, openly delusional or delirious? Before answering this question, it is worth delving into one last set of concepts heavily indebted to structuralist theory to throw up some vital connections between forms of psychoanalytic criticism and the relevance of 'psychosis' to analyses of discourse. We will see how Lacanian inspired discourse analysis posits a fundamental relation between 'psychosis' and knowledge production, one that will reverberate well beyond these structuralist framings.

### **1.13 Lacan and Althusser: The *cahiers pour l'analyse***

Conjoining the structuralist impulse charted above with psychoanalytic theory inevitably brings us to the figure of Jacques Lacan and we can trace his influence on this reading strategy via a detour through the Althusserian inspired journal, *Cahiers pour l'Analyse*. The journal was edited by a group of philosophy students at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* (ENS) in Paris in the late 1960's. It published major articles by many of the most significant thinkers of the period including Althusser, Derrida, Foucault, Irigaray and Lacan. It can be viewed in many respects as the mouthpiece for a collective intellectual endeavour to provide a systematic and unified 'theory of discourse' that drew from Althusser's revitalised Marxism as well as Lacanian inspired psychoanalysis. As such, it makes an important reference point for the philosophical enterprise referred to as structuralism. I wish to draw attention here to the early work of Jacques Alain-Miller who studied initially under Althusser before becoming increasingly drawn to Lacan, both on a personal and intellectual level, in and around the mid 1960's. The text that is of relevance to our question of method emerged in 1964,



just after Lacan founded a new school of psychoanalysis (Ecole Freudienne de Paris) following his expulsion from the IPA. Miller, along with various philosophy students from the ENS, established themselves in a 'cartel' and Miller, along with Yves Duroux and Jean-Claude Milner (2012), wrote what many consider to be the inaugural document of the Cahiers, *Action of the Structure*. The article set out to provide a so-called 'unitary theory of discourse' whilst making space for the subject in the scientific analysis of the 'structuring structure'. My interest here in the article is its relation to previous discussions above on the construction of science and the role of the epistemological break. The article, in keeping with the anti-humanism of the ENS, does not start with 'given' or 'lived' experience as a point of departure but rather with that which structures such experience. This does not mean, however, that Miller et al wanted to do away with subjective experience altogether but rather to conceptualise the idea of structure, in tandem with Lacanian psychoanalysis, to arrive at a definition of structure as "that which puts in place an experience for the subject that it includes" (p.71).

This line of thought leads Miller to make a distinction between 'structuring' and 'structured' dimensions of the complex whole. The difference between these two modalities of the structure of discourse is understood by emphasising how the structure as a whole includes something that disturbs or interrupts its action. The structure, according to Miller, necessarily includes a reflexive element - "an element that turns back on reality and perceives it, reflects it and signifies it, an element capable of redoubling itself on its own account" (p.72). We may note some similarity here with Althusser's thought on the role overdetermination plays in reflecting contradictions back onto the complex whole from which they emanate. Miller wants to stress how this element within the structure introduces a gap or absence in the overall process. The structure misses something which, on a subjective level, is covered over or filled in by an imaginary/ideological representation of completeness. Ideology as such masks over this missing gap within any given social totality. Miller argues that every structure must allow for the missing element which, in turn, conditions the need

for a representation of sorts to 'sew up' or 'suture' this lack. Miller refers to this element or structuring lack as a 'utopic' point, a point that should not rightly exist and defies any formal ideological recognition. What is required is a scientific analysis to expose such lacks within the social structure. The point of this theoretical analysis of 'the social' - that which is constructed by discursive mechanisms - is then to establish where these utopic points are in operation and uncover them. The question that then arises for Miller is what form of science is required for such an analysis? He goes on to argue that what distinguishes a true science and establishes its ability to reveal to us such lacks, gaps or utopic points, is the 'epistemological break' that expels any lack on which ideology functions. It must eliminate any gaps that are so crucial for non-scientific ideological discourse.<sup>20</sup> In short, science as a discourse 'lacks any lack', it excludes, or borrowing from Lacanian theory, it 'forecloses' the necessary gap within discourse. In respect of this Miller writes, "The closure proper to science therefore operates a redistribution between a closed field, on the one hand, of which one perceives no limit if one considers it from the inside, and a foreclosed space on the other. *Foreclosure* is the other side of closure. This term will suffice to indicate that every science is structured like a 'psychosis': the foreclosed returns under the form of the impossible" (p.80). We will note in the following chapter how for Lacan, the concept of foreclosure represents the fundamental principle that conditions psychotic structure. For the time being, it is only important to recognize that for Miller, and we might say for the *Cahiers* more generally, Science as founded on an epistemological break has an affinity with the structure of 'psychosis'. Both exclude a constitutive element (the Utopic point, the ideological subject) within their structure. The role of symptomatic reading, as discussed above, may allow therefore a means to identify how a rupture is caused within a structure instating a new problematic or form of science.

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<sup>20</sup> The *Cahiers* is an undoubtedly complex body of work. Peter Hallward (2012) summarises this collective effort as an attempt "to develop an account of ideological discourse, informed by the emerging sciences of linguistics, psychoanalysis and historical materialism, in terms that would allow 'political practice' to understand and transform it in somewhat the same way that analysis allows for the understanding and transformation of a neurosis" (p.50). Again, we see clearly the connect between diagnostic entities and socio-political frameworks.

### 1.14 Surface Reading

On the one hand, we might argue that forms of symptomatic reading might be well suited to the task of deciphering 'psychotic' text. Texts which appear on the surface nonsensical, irrational, delirious or possibly even meaningless, seem to call for a method which unearths that which is taking place beneath these strange hieroglyphs or odd uses of symbolic communication. Indeed, symptomatic reading seems particularly well suited to providing an ideological or social critique, as it uncovers the dynamics and discursive operations that exist outside of the text but nevertheless condition the text itself. This in turn may be useful in understanding how 'psychotic' texts can be utilised to construct wider cultural insights. I have shown, likewise, how the concept of the unconscious may be especially useful on a philosophical level in providing a structure for interpreting such modalities of writing. However, it is worth recognizing that by employing psychoanalysis to critique texts, we inadvertently start to absorb 'psychosis' into the psychoanalytic cannon. By this I mean that whilst we utilise concepts such as the 'unconscious' or 'foreclosure' to interpret 'psychosis' we start to colonise madness with psychoanalytic knowledge. A strange kind of hermeneutic loop is at work here when one tries to apprehend 'psychotic' text. The Foucault/Derrida debate alerts us to this very problem. Derrida (1994) would likely hold that psychoanalysis is a privileged means by which we can confront madness and perhaps there is, therefore, less cause for alarm. But this style of critical reading, one centred on uncovering hidden meaning or deep unconscious structure, potentially contains another pitfall, yet a pitfall that constructively reveals to us again some intriguing similarities between theory production and madness itself. Psychoanalysis and structuralism (and to this we might add the various other critical practices touched upon above, including Marxism, deconstruction, grammatology, new historicism, etc.) all privilege the idea that something hidden, some veiled operation or force, is at work in ascribing a text's true meaning or ideological significance. We may loosely label these critical practices under the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' discussed earlier - the philosophical and literary legacy left to us via Marx, Freud and Nietzsche. To close I want to demonstrate how these reading

practices are themselves imbued with a paranoid sensibility and offer a methodological caution via the work of Eve Sedgwick (2003) which may assist us in delineating the different ways in which 'psychotic' text can be appropriated to further forms of clinical and cultural theory.

In her 2003 essay, *Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You*, Sedgwick argues that this 'hermeneutics of suspicion' which has come to dominate critical thinking and literary analysis is itself characterised by a strong paranoid sensibility. In fact, she goes so far as to state that this paranoid stance has become synonymous with criticism itself. Such practices focus their attention on the latent meaning of surface phenomena, whilst drawing linkages and relations between different diffuse elements in order to construct a coherent whole or systematised interpretation. Furthermore, she argues that this paranoid stance is contagious; it tends to consume other ways of knowing (or reading) through its systematicity and its ability to form ever stronger associative links. To make this claim she finds support in the work of philosopher and psychologist, Sylvan S. Tomkins and his theory of affects. For Tomkins (1963), paranoia is something he refers to as a 'strong theory'; it dominates other ways of thinking and comes to order more and more of experience so that nothing else can propagate. 'Weak theory', on the other hand, does not denote a theory of little use or value but rather one that focuses in upon selective areas and may result in highly specific insights that are not widely attributable to other domains or objects of study. In keeping with this, Sedgwick writes that "while paranoid theoretical proceedings both depend on and reinforce the structural dominance of monopolistic 'strong theory', there may also be benefit in exploring the extremely varied, dynamic, and historically contingent ways that strong theoretical constructs interact with weak ones in the ecology of knowing" (p.145). Sedgwick (2003) outlines what she believes are the main attributes of paranoia in respect of reading practices. She identifies paranoia as being *anticipatory, reflexive and mimetic, a strong theory, a theory of negative effects* and lastly a theory that places its *faith in exposure*. This use of Tomkins affect theory is further developed by Sedgwick via an appeal to the

work of Melanie Klein (1946), in particular her theorisation of the 'paranoid-schizoid' and 'depressive' positions. What Sedgwick finds so useful in Klein's work is the reparative operations for the ego that can be achieved via the oscillation between these two polarities. On this oscillatory dynamic she maps Tomkins strong and weak theory as well as the interplay between his notion of positive and negative affects. Although Sedgwick's Kleinian inflected practice is clearly derived from a vastly different theoretical lineage to one we have traced over the course of this chapter, we can see once again the particular use of psychoanalysis in developing different modalities of reading, ones that have a direct appeal to forms of madness itself. The Lacanian inspired epistemological break and Sedgwick's reflections on critical reading both posit a fundamental affinity between theory production and 'paranoia/psychosis'. We will want to hold onto this seemingly odd correlation over the course of the thesis.

Sedgwick's notion of reparative reading foregrounds the potentially rich reading practices that can result when paranoid stances are complimented by other ways of knowing. The two do not, for Sedgwick, have to occupy a mutually exclusive relation. In fact, she argues that "it is sometimes the most paranoid-tending people who are able to, and need to, develop and disseminate the richest reparative practices. And if the paranoid or the depressive positions operate on a smaller scale than the level of individual typology, they operate also on a larger: that of shared histories, emergent communities, and the weaving of intertextual discourse" (2003, p.150). Sedgwick's reparative reading, with its distrust of paranoid and strong theoretical stances provides considerable support to what is increasingly being referred to as 'surface reading' in literary criticism; essentially, a move away from symptomatic practices and the associated hermeneutics of suspicion that have dominated for so long. This coalesced in a 2009 special edition of the journal *Representations*. It is opened by Best and Marcus (2009) who provide a survey of surface reading in their article *The Way We Read Now*. Sedgwick's reparative analysis features amongst other practitioners (Sontag, 1966; Gallop, 2000) of non-symptomatic reading who maintain fidelity to a text's surface. From this, they

distil surface reading into five overall concerns that take their leave from symptomatic practices. They frame them as follows: “Surface as materiality”; “surface as the intricate verbal structure of literary language”; “attention to surface as a practice of critical description”; “surface as the location of patterns that exist within and across texts” and “surface as literal meaning”. Over the course of this thesis we may well find that this oscillation between paranoid and reparative modes of analysis, or indeed between a focus on surface and depth, may provide a rich resource for critiquing modes of ‘psychotic’ text and bodies of theory produced from them. Essentially, this addendum to the practice of symptomatic reading provides a caution that may be necessary to counter the dominance of the hermeneutics of suspicion underwriting my main methodological approach. Moreover, this excursion into reparative modes of analysis has thrown up yet another correlation between ‘psychosis’/paranoia (madness) and the production of theory (knowledge), a correlation we shall track across the course of this thesis.

So, what does all this mean for my intended project? Essentially, this style of literary analysis, with a strong relation to forms of continental philosophy, psychoanalysis and critical theory, is not something that has been attempted within the Mad Studies project. In fact, this use of what we might think of as ‘high theory’ and abstract academic analysis potentially presents a problem for Mad Studies which, as we have seen, takes issue with forms of high intellectualism that effectively commit acts of epistemic violence. However, I maintain that there is a strong philosophical basis for utilising the above conceptual apparatus and methods of reading in the interpretation of mad writing and I shall outline the beginnings of a framework for doing so below.

### **1.15 Methods and Madness**

From the ground covered above we can devise a set of reading strategies and associated conceptual criteria with which to firstly critique those bodies of knowledge that have already been produced from ‘psychotic’ text (Part 1 of the thesis) and then to apply to this project’s original object

of study (Part 2 of the thesis). Although this list is not exhaustive, we can distil the insights above into the following concepts and methodological concerns encountered so far; symptomatic practices tasked with elements of the text that are only interpretable via recourse to hidden operations (the unconscious, structure, etc.). In keeping with this, a focus on epistemological breaks or ruptures within the text; a focus on the way meaning is construed from the process of overdetermination, or rather the relation between latent and manifest content; a concern for the 'depth versus surface' binary; an awareness that paranoid sensibilities (negative affects, strong theory, reflexive or mimetic strategies, and anticipation and revelation) can potentially swamp analyses; as a methodological caution, a mindfulness towards surface or reparative analysis to counter the worst excesses of paranoid reading and lastly, the importance of the author's sense of self or "I" within the narrative, as well as its temporal location.

It is important to stress that as we proceed over the coming few chapters, the question of method raised here (with its attendant conceptual criteria) will be augmented by the different theoretical discussion encountered. For instance, we will see in the following chapter how a concern for hidden meaning in the context of Schreber's *Memoirs* by Freud and Lacan alike, leads to a set of concepts and ideas which in turn can be used for later analysis of 'psychotic' text. I am mindful that this 'theory generating theory' dynamic or 'hermeneutic loop' poses potential problems or methodological issues. In one sense this is unavoidable; in another it speaks to the very heart of this project which focuses on the way in which knowledge is constructed. It is important to be aware of this relation between the practice of reading and the theory derived from it; or perhaps more importantly, whether the text itself is being used to bolster the theory or whether the theory is genuinely illuminating our appreciation of madness. I suspect that this question is one not easily answered and that this in itself demonstrates how the positioning (manipulation?) of 'psychotic' text reveals to us the relation between madness and reason or between clinic and culture. Whatever the

case, the preceding discussions and insights will be built upon over the course of Part 1. To conclude, this chapter leads us to the following research questions:

**Research Questions for Part 1:**

How do the different theories encountered construe meaning from mad writing and furthermore, what set of conceptual criteria or reading practices do they employ to do so?

Do these theoretical systems have recourse to latent, hidden meaning or surface level phenomena?

Do these forms of clinical and cultural theory position madness/'psychosis' as being interior or exterior to reason and socially shared meaning?

**Research Questions for Part 2:**

Can a clinical reading be derived from the text in line with the clinical insights exposed in the first half of the thesis?

Conversely, can a broader psychosocial reading be constructed from the text, following the analyses already covered?

And ultimately, what do these differing ways in which mad writing can be read, and subsequently positioned, reveal to us about the nature of madness itself?

Effectively, what all of these research questions represent are the different ways in which I am going to tackle the main issue at stake within this overall project. To reiterate, the essential driving impetus to this research initiative is an examination on how knowledge is produced from instances of mad writing and most importantly what this process of knowledge production does to the concept of madness itself.



## **Part 1: Schreber, Mad Writing and Associated Sites of Psychosocial Theory.**

*“The delusions of paranoiacs have an unpalatable external similarity and internal kinship to the systems of our philosophers”- Sigmund Freud (1919, p.261).*

## Chapter 2: Psychoanalytic Clinical Interpretation

I want to turn now to particular instances of ‘psychotic’ text, or mad writing, which have been utilised to further forms of theoretical production. Undoubtedly, the major figure over the next three chapters is that of Judge Daniel Paul Schreber. Whilst keeping our methodological discussion in mind and the way in which, philosophically speaking, interpretations of mad writing have been problematized (the latest example of which being contained within Mad Studies) I shall demonstrate how Schreber’s text (1903) has been utilised by a diverse range of thinkers that straddle the psychosocial field. From strictly clinical speculations through to wide ranging ideas about modernist forms of communication and power, Schreber has provided the raw material for many prominent theorists to propagate their ideas. This ‘meta-analysis’ of Schreber over the coming three chapters also provides a foundation for my own later analysis of PKD’s *Exegesis*. This foundation, augmented by my discussion above concerning method and reading practices, introduces the theoretical tools and techniques that a variety of scholars have employed to derive meaning from Schreber’s writing. Whether they are able to stand up to the concerns voiced from within the Mad Studies project and beyond remains to be seen.

However, my aim is to delve into the manner by which these authors have used Schreber’s text in order that we can appreciate how theory or knowledge has been produced specifically from instances of mad writing. Schreber, although the most prominent figure throughout Part 1 is not the sole example of mad writing discussed. Authors who have utilised Schreber in their intellectual endeavours often have recourse to other mad writers or examples of ‘psychotic’ text. I shall also touch on these going forward, yet it will be Schreber who comprises the main source for theoretical speculation emanating from mad writing. To begin, I shall firstly examine the work of Sigmund Freud (1911) and wider aspects of the psychoanalytic tradition. As the introduction to the latest New York Review of Books (NYRB) edition of the *Memoirs* attests, in many respects Schreber will forever be

'Freud's Schreber'. It is Freud's reflection on this case that provides the absolute bedrock to most, if not all, later interpretations and as such psychoanalysis becomes our first site or theoretical framework to be examined.

The story of Freud, Psychoanalysis and the Schreber material starts in the summer of 1910 when Freud and his Hungarian contemporary, Sandor Ferenczi spent two weeks together in Sicily. Freud took with him a book entitled *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* (Memoirs of a Nerve Patient) by Dr. Judge Daniel Paul Schreber, former Senatspräsident in Dresden. The book was originally given to him by another dominant figure within psychoanalytical circles, Karl Gustav Jung. Although relatively well discussed within the psychiatric field, the full impact and importance of the *Memoirs* was yet to be widely recognised outside of it.<sup>21</sup> The article *Psycho-analytic notes upon an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)* was published in the Summer of 1911, with a further postscript released prior to the third International Psycho-analytical Congress in September 1911, published in full earlier the next year. The article, or 'Schreber case' as it would come to be known, undoubtedly represents Freud's most important and sustained engagement on the issue of paranoid delusions and 'psychotic' phenomena. However, the paper is not solely confined to the analysis of paranoia and in fact contains the beginnings of far larger concerns within Freud's metapsychological work, including the issue of narcissism as well as the operations of repression and projection. Towards the end of the paper Freud also touches upon issues that were of great interest to him during this period, such as mythology and totemic group functioning. Whatever may be said of Freud's analysis of the Schreber case, one thing is certain; it was Freud's paper on the *Memoirs* that would prove the catalyst to a wealth of attention Schreber would come to receive as well as elevating him to the position as the most celebrated case of

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<sup>21</sup> Freud's original intention was to work on the published memoir as if it were a 'case' with the younger Ferenczi and to jointly publish their findings. However, correspondence exchanged between the two men following the trip points towards a heated incident whilst in Palermo resulting in Freud penning the paper alone (Freud & Ferenczi, 1994).

madness in contemporary times. Schreber himself would quickly come to have as much purchase in wider cultural theory as within purely psychiatric or psychoanalytic fields.<sup>22</sup>

## 2.2 Schreber's Madness

Judge Daniel Paul Schreber, born July 25 1842, penned the literary account of his madness between 1900-1902 following his second breakdown or bout of 'mental illness'. Although previously admitted to the Sonnenstein Asylum much earlier in October 1884 for a case of 'acute hypochondria', it was not until his appointment as presiding judge over a division of the Saxon Appeal Court in Dresden in 1893 that he suffered his second bout of 'mental instability', the one for which he is still so well-known due to his documenting of his experiences during the time. Between 1893 and 1902 Schreber was admitted to a number of differing asylums before his eventual discharge. Clearly written with a flair for literary or imaginative style, the *Memoirs* have been noted by Freud to be authored by "a man of superior mental gifts" as well as being "endowed with an unusual keenness alike of intellect and of observation" (1911, p.10). These 'superior gifts' result in a startlingly vivid account of delusional paranoia which no doubt assisted their eventual publication in 1903. Unfortunately, Schreber's stability was not long lasting and in 1907 he suffered his third major breakdown, one from which he was not to recover. He spent the rest of his years interned in a state Asylum before his death at Leipzig-Dösen on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1911. This autobiography of madness would serve Freud as the foundation for his wider theorisations on the 'psychoses'. The potential problem of Freud having never met Schreber first hand nor knowing little of his personal or social history (not even aware of his age at the time of his experiences) is dismissed when he states that:

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<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Schreber's cultural impact is far wider than just these theoretical analyses of this historical case study. In 2015 a novelisation of Schreber's experience was published entitled *Playthings* authored by Alex Pheby and in 2012 a documentary *Shock, Head, Soul* (Pummell, 2012) detailing his life whilst using visual animation techniques brought Schreber's experiences to the screen. More recently a BBC radio drama premiered a long forgotten and unpublished Antony Burgess screenplay *Schreber* in which Burgess utilised the *Memoirs* to illuminate aspects of modern life with its intimate portrayal of repression and rebellion within the family unit.

since paranoiacs cannot be compelled to overcome their internal resistances, and since in any case they only say what they choose to say, it follows that this is precisely a disorder in which a written report or printed case history can take the place of personal acquaintance with the patient (1911, p.9).

No further justification is required for Freud in utilising the Schreber material as the basis for his wider theory on delusional paranoia. Our earlier engagement with discussions concerning the many dubious ethical approaches to mad narratives voiced from within the Mad Studies project resonates loudly here. Freud, having never met Schreber, nor knowing the slightest detail of his biographical life, is content to state that his following reflections and interpretations are in no way hampered by the author's context or views remaining completely absent. Already with Freud we encounter the dilemma of utilising 'psychotic' text as a platform to espouse a theoretical project that effectively side-lines (or completely ignores) the context from which the author of that 'psychotic' text writes. It is doubtful that Freud's comments about paranoiacs' lack of ability to overcome 'internal resistances' would hold much water amongst contemporary debates within the Mad Studies field. This complete divorce between Freud's theory and the figure behind the *Memoirs* is one that I aim to keep in mind as we track the ensuing psychoanalytic interpretations.

Freud's case history charts the various strange and other-worldly phenomena that so characterised Schreber's 'psychotic' episodes. The first matter that he draws attention to contains perhaps the seeds of Schreber's later pre-occupations. Freud points towards a series of dreams Schreber experienced between his notification of his appointment as Senatspräsident in June 1893 and later in October of that year when he took up the post. The most telling is Schreber's statement that whilst in a state between sleeping and waking he was overcome by the prodromal insight "that it really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse" (1903, p.46). This preoccupation with sexual function and his subsequent female self-identification undoubtedly becomes one, if not the, major theme within the *Memoirs*. As his illness progressed, Schreber went on to experience feelings of persecution, great sensitivity to light and sound, as well as an increase in visual and auditory hallucinations. Importantly, various delusional ideas also become localised on his

body which he believed to be in the throes of decomposition. The source of his persecutory ideas came to be fixated on the figure of Professor Flechsig of the Leipzig clinic in which he was previously interned. The operation which Freud specifically highlights, by which Flechsig is believed to persecute him, is one Schreber famously termed 'soul-murder'. As Schreber's 'psychosis' intensifies he constructs an elaborate delusional system incorporating numerous differing elements. Dr Weber (Director at the Sonnenstein Asylum) states in a report of 1899 that the crux of Schreber's delusional system is his belief that he has a mission to redeem the world, and to restore mankind to their lost state of bliss. The most essential component of this mission concerns his necessary transformation into a woman. This transformation is required for Schreber, as only then can he enter into sexual union with God and restore 'the order of the world'.

Summing up the intricate and systematic nature of Schreber's delusional system is no easy task due to the elaborate fashion in which the *Memoirs* are presented. Perhaps the most useful principle by which we may wish to organise the *Memoirs* is to view Schreber's delusions as a constant contrasting of two distinct discourses (Lucas, 2003). On the one hand we encounter an overtly religious/spiritual discourse that evokes God, miraculous phenomena, divine manifestations and appeals to a heavenly or celestial hierarchy. The second discourse - a discourse of science - concerns Schreber's lengthy descriptions of biological process, nerves, sexual function and operations of impregnation and reproduction. This admixture of religious and scientific terminology leads to a unique universe corresponding to the most bizarre laws of cause and effect. Human souls for Schreber come to be composed of nerves which have both a physical manifestation but also a divine or psychic component. God, who undoubtedly plays a role of huge significance, is described as a body of nerves through which each human soul will come to pass. Accordingly, Schreber speaks of divine rays by which he comes to understand the inner workings of the universe and God's place within it. God, bifurcated in nature, comes to comprise both the lower god (Ahriman) and the upper god (Ormuzd). The Persian or Zoroastrian names of Schreber's Gods are likely to have been derived

from his own literary knowledge, namely Byron's *Manfred* (1816). Freud also points towards other literary sources enmeshed within Schreber's text such as Goethe's *Faust* (1808).

### 2.3 Freud's Interpretation

Freud begins his interpretation by focusing in on the source of Schreber's persecution, initially Flechsig, then his supposed ally God, both of whom are implicated in the attempt at 'soul murder'. Freud's initial assertion, based upon the Schreber material as well as his own past experience with 'psychotics' is that:

the person to whom the delusion ascribes so much power and influence, in whose hands all the threads of the conspiracy converge, is, if he is definitely named, either identical with someone who played an equally important part in the patient's emotional life before his illness, or is easily recognizable as a substitute for him (1911, p.41).

Importantly, the delusion is used to compensate for an oppositional transformation in the patient's emotional feelings towards the person who is deemed to have played such a vital role. Accordingly, Freud takes Schreber's relation with Flechsig as of prime importance. Originally, it is pointed out, Schreber maintained a great deal of warmth towards the physician who treated him so successfully at Leipzig. Indeed, Schreber speaks of his 'liveliest gratitude' that both he and his wife felt in respect of his former doctor. For Freud, however, these feelings did not stop at simple gratitude and he draws attention to the apparent affection Schreber maintained towards Flechsig - an affection that coincided with feelings of a 'feminine attitude' at the onset of his second illness. The combination of 'feminine attitude' and feelings of 'affectionate dependence' upon his doctor intensify for Freud to the point of erotic desire. And it is this erotic desire, subsequently counteracted by Schreber's 'masculine protest' that forms the core of Freud's interpretation.

Schreber's 'psychosis' has its root, therefore, an 'outburst of homosexual libido' directed towards his former physician, Doctor Flechsig. The struggle against this libidinal impulse accordingly gives rise to his symptoms which come to be so vividly described within the *Memoirs*. Freud

attempts to strengthen his argument concerning Schreber's homosexual impulses by referring to a supposedly telling passage when Schreber states that a moment of fresh 'nerve collapse' occurred in the context of his wife's absence. Freud speculates that Schreber's wife had, until this point, served as some form of "protection against the attractive power of the men about him" (1911, p.45) thereby diverting his unconscious homosexual phantasy. Once the hypothesis that homosexual libidinal impulses are the genesis of Schreber's paranoia is established, Freud then points toward another telling moment within the case. Schreber's transfer of persecutory feelings from Flechsig to God and the corresponding symbolic associations with both figures is interpreted by Freud as being indicative of Schreber's struggle against the father complex. God, Flechsig and later Schreber's comments about the Sun all come to be understood as various embodiments of his father, a father who for Freud plays a crucial role in Schreber's symptoms and delusional ideation. Accordingly, Freud states that the "patient's struggle with Flechsig became revealed to him as a conflict with God, and we must therefore construe it as an infantile conflict with the father" (ibid, p.55). For Freud, the symbolic presence of the father is replete throughout Schreber's *Memoirs*. By drawing on various cosmic myths and ancient symbolism, Freud concludes that a pre-occupation with the Sun "is nothing but another sublimated symbol for the father" (p.54). Unsurprisingly perhaps, the role of the father and the threat of castration are viewed as providing Schreber with the material to construct his phantasy of female metamorphosis and his corresponding 'soul-murder'. Although Freud confesses that not every facet of his delusional system can be interpreted in such a manner, the underlying premise is certain; namely that the cause and content of Schreber's paranoia is an outburst of homosexual desire in the context of his on-going struggle against the father function. We will recall our methodological discussion that raises the inherent tendency within symptomatic analysis which attempts to locate unconscious mechanisms conditioning a text's overall structure. Althusser and others, as we have noted, have targeted their focus on the construction of meaning which is concentrated within the text's hidden or submerged elements. In some sense, we see Freud here engaging in a proto- symptomatic reading of Schreber's *Memoirs* which is attempting to



uncover a particular element (the Father) within the text that remains operational from a concealed depth. Although not specifically expressed by Schreber in such terms, Freud, in his reading of the memoir, is associating significant importance to an element of Schreber's paranoia that he believes is only visible due to its effects on the surface of the text. Let us remain with this focus on the father function and unconscious homosexual impulses within Schreber's unconscious mental life as we further examine Freud's analysis of the intricate working of paranoia.

## 2.4 Mechanisms of Paranoia

If the father complex and its associations with the homosexual phantasy are the basis for Schreber's symptoms and overall paranoia, we may ask, what separates this from other forms of neurosis? How does this particular dynamic result in 'psychotic' phenomena as opposed to other neurotic symptoms? Freud touches on this and determines that the particular character of paranoia must be sought in the specific form the paranoid symptoms take, as well as the mechanism by which such symptoms are formed. By focusing his analysis to the form and mechanism of Schreber's symptoms he is able explain how the homosexual wish comes to be manifest in an array of bizarre and other-worldly beliefs. To construct such an explanation Freud has recourse to the stages of psycho-sexual development as previously outlined within his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905). The early developmental trajectory of the libido from auto-erotism to object-love, understood also as narcissistic identification, is shown to be of vital importance to any theory of paranoia.<sup>23</sup> The relation to 'psychosis' is found in instances whereby those who have not adequately freed themselves from these early narcissistic stages are confronted with an intensification of libido towards a same-sex object. As a result, the paranoiac attempts to "defend themselves against any such sexualisation of their social instinctual cathexes" (1911, p.62) and does so primarily through the mechanism of projection. As he writes:

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<sup>23</sup> Freud (1905) reasons that homosexual tendencies within this stage are not completely renounced but are deflected from the initial sexual object and combine with various ego instincts thereby investing social relations with an unconscious erotic factor.

the most striking characteristic of symptom formation in paranoia is the process which deserves the name projection. An internal perception is suppressed, and, instead, its content, after undergoing a certain kind of distortion, enters consciousness in the form of an external perception (ibid. p.66).

In so doing, the projection necessarily distorts the initial libidinal impulse (I, a man, love him) into its opposite (I do not love him – I hate him). This contradiction within the subject's psyche is then resolved, albeit in a skewed fashion, by reasoning that this source of hate is derived from the other; it is externalised (I do not love him – I hate him, because he persecutes me). Projection is also shown to play a part in Schreber's pre-occupation with the end of the world and his own impending death. This for Freud exemplifies Schreber's withdrawal of his libidinal cathexes from people and the social sphere. Accordingly, the end of the world catastrophe is a projection of his own internal catastrophe resulting in his subjective life-world coming to an end due to his withdrawal of love from it. This withdrawal of ego-cathexes or libidinal energy from the external world into oneself in cases of 'psychosis' is further outlined by Freud (1924) in his later paper on the difference between the diagnostic structures.

It may come as no surprise to state that Freud's' analysis of the Schreber case has been widely criticised for what now reads as a pathologizing of homosexuality due to a complete reduction of Schreber's 'psychotic' universe to an inability to adequately reconcile various homosexual impulses and the implication that homosexuality is linked to developmental arrest. Freud himself stated that his "piece is formally imperfect, fleetingly improvised" (letter to Jung 18 December 1910).<sup>24</sup> The Schreber case is undoubtedly open for criticism, yet Freud's analysis of the autobiography does contain one fundamentally important notion for this project, which relates to the way in which 'psychotic' text or the written expression of one's delusion may allow for further interpretation due to the way in which it tries to reconfigure the social. In effect, Freud, towards the

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<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, later research on Schreber's own father, Moritz Schreber, points towards a domineering and abusive paternal figure far removed from Freud's assertion that he was a man of good moral standing. Morton Schatzman's (1973) *Soul Murder: Persecution in the Family* as well as William, G. Niederland's (1984) *The Schreber Case: Psychoanalytic Profile of a Paranoid Personality* provide the most thorough examination of Schreber's relation with his father and the possibility that this had a direct bearing on his later psychological turmoil.

end of the Schreber case, opens up the possibility that the paranoid delusion shouldn't just be dismissed as the mere ravings of the insane but rather something intimately related to socio-cultural operations. When speaking of the disintegration of the 'psychotic's' subjective world, Freud states that:

the paranoiac builds it again, not more splendid, it is true, but at least so that he can once more live in it. He builds it up by the work of his delusions. The delusional formation, which we take to be the pathological product, is in reality an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction (1911, p.70-71).

Herein lies the central tenant that distinguishes Freudian and classical psychoanalytic interpretations of delusional paranoia from their psychiatric counterpart; the delusion is not the illness itself but rather an attempt to reconstruct or compensate for the subject's problematic integration within a libidinal social field. So, whereas libido becomes detached from its initial objects it is later repaired, albeit in a skewed fashion, with the work of the delusion. The delusion, therefore, represents Schreber's attempts to reinsert himself back into a social sphere; it has a restorative function and can thereby be viewed as an attempt at self-cure. Schreber's need to commit this delusional system to writing (*das Aufschreibesystem*, his 'writing-down-system') and to subsequently publish it has furthermore been evidenced as his attempts to make sense of his 'psychosis' or contain it. It is this emphasis on delusion as a recovery process via a resuscitation of social bonds that could be argued to be the most important contribution towards psychoanalytic approaches to 'psychosis'. Perhaps the final summation of the Schreber case should go to Freud himself who reasons that "it remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber's delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe" (1911, p.79).

So what are we to make of the 'Schreber case' in light of contemporary discussions pertaining to the ethics of experts or academics utilising mad narratives to further claims to knowledge? On the one hand, Freud's paper appears as an attempt to provide an authoritarian

interpretation on an individual's 'psychotic' experience that bothers neither for contextual background nor the views or opinions of the author beyond their immediate written testimony. The notion of a dialogue between Freud and Schreber whereby meaning or knowledge is derived from the *Memoirs* in tandem is a non-starter. Freud claims to have the keys to unlocking Schreber's 'psychosis' and no further consideration is required. With regard to his technique, we certainly get an instance here of the way in which mad writing has been subjected to a 'suspicious hermeneutic gaze' which seeks to find meaning at the level of depth, whilst employing symbolism or examples of an 'absent cause' structuring the overall text. Again, Freud, the 'expert knower', is able to delve into the depths of Schreber's madness and retrieve the meaning for us all. The methodological caution offered by Sedgwick (2003) and the paranoid stance of much critical reading has never perhaps been more apt than with Freud's paper on the 'psychoses' themselves. Yet things become a little more complicated when we reflect on Freud's last quote. Freud is openly questioning by the end of the paper whether paranoid delusions themselves contain a kernel of truth, and by doing so, completely upends any static binary between sanity and madness or psychological normality and pathology. In doing so, we perhaps get closer to some of the political underpinnings of the Mad Studies field. So, although the manner by which Freud effectively commits some kind of epistemic violence towards Schreber's text comes into direct conflict with a general ethical principle within Mad Studies research, Freudian psychoanalysis possibly presents itself as a potential ally to the larger project as it is an intellectual framework that, as we shall see going forward, questions the demarcation between those who are deemed to be mad and those that aren't. Although the 'neurotic/psychotic' division undoubtedly exists within many aspects of psychoanalytic thinking, Freud's early paper on paranoid functioning, I would argue, offers a glimpse of how psychoanalytic theory could support the political aims of Mad Studies-like endeavours due to its problematizing of madness as a distinctly pathological entity. Lastly, and something worth mentioning as we track its influence across our next psychoanalytic thinker, is that Freud's analysis opens up the fundamentally important notion of a delusion acting as a form of stabilisation, a libidinal social bond. An interesting parallel is identifiable

here in that Freud suggests Schreber's writing may also function to stabilise his 'psychosis'. Both the delusion and the process of writing share similar qualities in that they serve to anchor the subject in the face of chaos and fragmentation. I should stress, however, that they are not to be viewed as identical but rather that these differing modes of stabilisation speak once again to the tight nexus between literary operations and 'psychotic' structure. Both the delusion and process of writing attempt to provide order to a fragmented subjective system. We can appreciate this still further by turning now to the work of Jacques Lacan. I do so in detail in order to provide a firm basis with which to later assist in the analysis of PKD's own *Exegesis*.

## 2.5 Lacan, 'Psychosis' & Schreber

If the classical psychoanalysis of Freud is characterised by the figure of the neurotic, then the figure of the 'psychotic' should surely be aligned with Lacan. Whereas Freud's engagement with delusional paranoia, 'schizophrenia' or the 'psychoses' formed a rather secondary concern, for Lacan it was at the forefront of his thinking and his reflections upon the topic characterise his intellectual life from one end to the other. From his doctoral thesis on the celebrated case of Aimee (1932) to his last theoretical formulations on topology and knot theory (1975-76), Lacan's periodic engagements with 'psychosis' could well serve as markers to his entire corpus. That being said, however, two distinct phases do emerge from within his work and both take their cue from two specific literary sites. The first phase - the so-called structuralist phase from the mid 1950's onwards - focuses, like Freud, on Schreber. Lacan's radical rereading of the *Memoirs* leads him to develop his first fully fledged model of 'psychosis' and the one for which he is perhaps still best known. Following which, Lacan in the 1970's has recourse to the literary works and life of James Joyce in order to elaborate a concept of 'psychosis' no longer envisioned through structural linguistics, but rather through the interlinking of all three of his psychic registers; Real, Symbolic, Imaginary. Although his doctoral thesis on the case of Aimee entitled, *De La Psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité* does not hold a prominent place within his overall work, it is worth noting the

significant influence Freud's paper on Schreber had on Lacan's interpretation and the fact that Lacan, likewise, utilised the writings of this delusional patient to further his earliest theories of paranoia and outline a structure of personality as alienation. No English translation of the thesis exists, nor the articles that Lacan first published relating to psychotic writing.<sup>25</sup> Suffice to say that his initial engagement here with 'psychotic' text perhaps best served him as a transitional piece from forensic medical clinician to the world of psychoanalysis. As Lacan later came to state, Aimee took him to the 'threshold of psychoanalysis'. To fully appreciate Lacan's crossing of this threshold and his theorisations on the 'psychosis' that drew less from his self-proclaimed former psychiatric master, De Cleraembault, in favour of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, then we must enter into his third seminar (1955-56) which itself delves again into the *Memoirs* of Schreber.

Lacan's third public seminar (1955-6) entitled *The Psychoses* utilises Schreber's *Memoirs* to develop a variety of concepts and operations that come to form not just his first comprehensive theory of 'psychosis' but also to provide a corner stone to his theoretical system in its entirety. His subsequent article published three years later entitled *On a question prior to any possible treatment of psychosis* (1959) also takes Schreber as the primary object of analysis. I will focus here on Lacan's elaboration of the so-called 'delusional metaphor' to provide an entry point into his engagement with Schreber and his subsequent theory of 'psychosis'. If nothing else can be said for Lacan's formulation of 'psychosis' during this period, it is that language in all its manifold forms constitutes the absolute horizon for any understanding of 'psychotic' phenomena. Lacan's reworking of psychoanalytic theory through the 'science' of structural linguistics provides him, in the 1950's, with the key components to develop a model of 'psychosis' that takes language, or rather the Symbolic, as the predominant mode or category of subjective constitution. In effect, his previous concern for the realm of the Imaginary is subordinated to language or overwritten by the Symbolic order. It is during this period that Lacan begins to rework his clinical and theoretical apparatus drawing heavily

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<sup>25</sup> See Lacan, J., Lévy-Valensi, J. & Migault, P. (1975) "Ecrits 'inspirés': Schizographie" in Lacan, J. *De la Psychose Paranoïaque dans ses Rapports avec la Personnalité*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

on Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) and his *Course in General Linguistics*. Particular emphasis is afforded to the reciprocal dynamic between the concepts of signifier and signified, through the readings of Saussure offered by linguist Roman Jakobson (1956) and anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1949).<sup>26</sup> The principle idea within Lacan's presentation of the Schreber case is that the delusional content within the *Memoirs* ('divine rays', 'nerve contact' with a malevolent god and Schreber's metamorphosis into a woman) are all facets of a larger delusional metaphor created by Schreber to compensate for the absence of a crucial element within his intra-psychic constitution. This element Lacan terms the 'name-of-the-father'. As we shall see, the name-of-the-father is for Lacan of absolute importance in ensuring a subject's anchoring within the symbolic, whilst also providing the means to navigate oneself through language. Without this the world of shared meaning - a world mediated through language - is rendered unstable resulting in complete 'psychotic' breakdown. By utilising the *Memoirs*, Lacan conveys how there exists a fundamental gap or missing link within Schreber's ability to make sense of the signifying chain which gives rise to his subjectivity. As a result, the very structure which constitutes Schreber-as-subject is rendered unstable and consequently the symbolic universe in which he is immersed begins to disintegrate. Before identifying how it is that such a breakdown occurs for Schreber, we must first clarify what Lacan has in mind with this crucial element within subjectivity; this name-of-the-father.

## 2.6 Name-of-the-Father

In order to provide such a clarification, we need to turn to the Oedipus complex. Lacan certainly found Freud's use of Sophocles' tragedy of interest; however, the mythical qualities it takes on were not favourable to Lacan's reworking of Freudian theory. He believed that Freud had in fact focused too strongly on the neurotic fantasy closely associated with this incestuous relationship

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<sup>26</sup> Lacan's relation to structuralism is perhaps not as straight forward as one may take for granted. Although easily placed within the early structuralist period, his later work potentially represents a radical break from this area of thought. Moreover, his earliest period of theorisation could well be said to have been more heavily influenced by the surrealist school in Paris from the 1920's/30's onwards. For further discussion see D. Macey (1988) *Lacan in Contexts*. London: Verso.

(Vanheule, 2011). Utilising the reformulated science of structural linguistics, Lacan sets out to provide a formalised account of Oedipus and again bases its subjective operation within the workings of language. In so doing, Lacan has recourse to various linguistic tropes in order to account for the shift that occurs during Oedipal development. Borrowing from Quintilian's (1856) *Institutes of Oratory*, he identifies 'metonymy' and 'metaphor' as those operations within language that function in a similar fashion to Freud's (1900-01) 'condensation' and 'displacement' as outlined in the *Interpretation of Dreams*. For Lacan, Oedipus is an account of how the subject relates to the Other and it is this relation which is based on a process of metaphorisation. In order to develop this, Lacan focuses upon the relationship between mother and child as the archetypal relation between subject and Other, with desire as the medium between both. The child in infancy is able to establish a signifier for maternal desire and in so doing associates itself with the imaginary phallus. However, the child is unable to understand its mother's absence and the cause of her coming and going. Dor (1998) here points to the similarity with Freud's commentary on the *Fort-da* experience. Essentially, the infant is left with unanswerable questions such as, *Why is Mother there and then not? What does she desire beyond myself?* The child is left without meaning as such. Although it has established an imaginary narcissistic relationship with the Other, viewing itself as the Phallus, these unresolved questions produce anxiety as the subject cannot answer why there is a lack of signified. The child is lost within maternal desire, consumed or swallowed up by it. Without being able to account for maternal desire and this presence-absence conundrum, the child has no concrete position of its own. Existential questions of place and purpose arise from such an anxiety. 'What do you want?' (*Che Vuoi?*) is the primary question arising from this maternal signifier (Chiesa, 2007).

The name-of-the-father brings an end to this imaginary struggle. This paternal metaphor leads to creation of new signification as the infant subject is able to comprehend a third term that crucially names maternal desire and consequently becomes substituted for it. Desire is, in this instance, subjected to the symbolic trope of metaphorisation. The name-of-the-father comes to



occupy the place as the 'signifier of signifiers' in comparison to the phallus as the 'signifier of signifieds'. In attempting to summarise the role of the name-of-the-father, Chiesa (2007) emphasizes how it functions as a rigid designator in that it always comes to determine the same thing i.e. the object of mother's desire. It introduces meaning and stops the incessant sliding of signifiers under the signified or the "non bi-univocal relationship between signifiers" (p. 94). The paternal metaphor is first and foremost a symbolic function allowing the newly instated signifier to organise maternal desire and introduce a phallic logic to symbolic space. Or put differently:

the paternal metaphor is an operation in which the name-of-the-father is substituted for the mother's desire, thereby producing a new species of meaning, phallic meaning, which heralds the introduction of the subject to the phallic economy of the neurotic and, therefore, to castration (Grigg, 2008, p.9).

The existential questions arising from the Other are now mediated by the introduction of a third term enabling the subject to construct a symbolic identity through language and the process of metaphorisation. This crucial signifier, therefore, comes to stand in for the signifier of culture as such. It plays a central determinate role in how people come to relate to each other and patterns of exchange relations.<sup>27</sup> If we now return back to the Schreber case we can see how the non-installation (or foreclosure) of such a crucial signifier necessarily ensures the onset of 'psychosis'.

## **2.7 Foreclosure and Schreber's Delusional Metaphor.**

The principle operation that Lacan locates within Schreber's *Memoirs*, that gives rise to his delusional system and his 'psychosis' as a whole, is one he terms 'foreclosure'. For Lacan, foreclosure comes to represent the fundamental difference between 'psychosis' and other subjective positions such as neurosis or perversion. Whereas they are marked by processes of repression and disavowal respectively, foreclosure becomes the primary characteristic of 'psychotic' structure. Utilising

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<sup>27</sup> The relevance of a subject's entry into exchange relations and perhaps culture at large brings us to the influence of Claude Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology and his work on semantic functions present in different societal or tribal cultures that allow symbolic thinking to operate despite internal contradictions being present to those functions. For further discussion on Lévi-Strauss' influence on Lacan see M. Zafiroopoulos (2010) *Lacan and Levi-Strauss or The Return to Freud*. Karan: London.

Freud's *Verdrängung* (repression), *Verwerfung* (foreclosure) and *Verleugnung* (disavowal),<sup>28</sup> Lacan essentially constructs a three-part system of differential diagnosis. *Verwerfung* which denotes a radical rejection is translated by Lacan into foreclosure and exists in stark opposition to Freud's (1925) notion of *Bejahung* (affirmation). Foreclosure designates an absolute repudiation of an object or proposition. So whereas in the operation of repression, something must have previously existed to have then been repressed, in foreclosure the thing itself is never there - it is entirely closed off from a field of possibility. Lacan in *Seminar III* and "*On a Question....*" identifies the name-of-the-father as that which has been foreclosed for Schreber and gives this crucial postulate a position of prime importance for any subsequent theory of 'psychosis'. Without the name-of-the-father, Schreber is left without the means to navigate his way through maternal desire and the field of the symbolic. Foreclosure gives rise to a hole or gap within the signifying chain resulting in Schreber's inability to construct meaning or a coherent sense of self. In its place, Schreber develops a delusional metaphor to compensate for this missing name-of-the-father. In order to highlight this, I will draw attention to various disruptions in metonymic process indicative of a foreclosed paternal metaphor as well as his use of autonoms that characterise his delusional system.

This gap or fissure in the signifying order is clearly referenced by Lacan who finds numerous expressions of it in Schreber's text. For example, Schreber speaks of God losing "the capacity to say one single word" (1903, p.187) as well as his own inability to find words or expressions to adequately describe his experience. For Lacan, this points towards a common issue, namely that "at the heart of psychosis there is a dead end, perplexity concerning the signifier" (1955-56, p.194). Schreber speaks of being unable to summon the very power of thought due to this dead end which he initially compensates for via various miraculous phenomena. These phenomena are described by Schreber as 'God's cries for help', the 'sound of the wind' and his own 'bellowing miracle'. These attempts to

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<sup>28</sup> There is a particular history to the translations of these terms and one that is also contested. Freud himself elaborates on this in his 1927 paper *Fetishism* when he states, "If we wanted to differentiate more sharply between the vicissitude of the *idea* as distinct from that of the *affect*, and reserve the word '*Verdrängung*' ['repression'] for the affect, then the correct German word for the vicissitude of the idea would be '*Verleugnung*' ['disavowal']" (2001, p.153).

'fill in' for the missing element within his subjective use of language are only partially successful, however, as such miracles only present Schreber with "elementary fragments of meaning [they] are nothing but remainder phenomena, which illustrate that the metonymy of the signifier actually came to a halt" (Vanheule, 2011, p.105). Without the adequate means to complete operations of metaphorisation, meaning is suspended for Schreber and he finds a fundamental barrier to his attempts to describe his predicament.

Following which, this language disturbance comes to be realised by Schreber as a fundamental crisis both internal and external. Without the usual support within the symbolic there is a corresponding effect on Schreber's subjectivity or sense of self-in-the-world. Foreclosure gives rise to the eradication or erasure of Schreber's subjectivity as he is unable to tie himself down, unable to put a halt to the enunciating subject. This becomes manifest in the numerous bodily disturbances Schreber experiences, experiences he describes as involving decomposition and fragmentation. Schreber further believes that he is wasting away or undergoing a process of degeneration due to the problematic symbolic relationship he has with his body. He is, in a sense, unable to articulate any coherent sense of self which is experienced as a problem at the level of his corporeal reality. It is not just at the level of his own body that Schreber experiences this rupture in metonymic process, but he externalises onto the world around him. As such he speaks of a "feeling as if I were moving among walking corpses" (1903, p.187), or that others around him are 'fleetingly improvised" (p.61). Consistency in this instance has given way and estrangement from his surroundings and himself is complete. In keeping with this, Lacan in "*On a Question....*" Indicates that it is only with this logic of foreclosure that we can understand Schreber's numerous references to 'soul-murder' whereby some fundamental component of his subjectivity is effaced. 'Soul-murder' refers, for Lacan, to a disturbance "at the most inmost juncture of the subject's sense of life" (1959, p.466). It is this foreclosed paternal metaphor that engenders this disturbance felt at the core of Schreber's soul. In its place he develops an alternative reality, one populated by a strange mix of newly invented terms.

Schreber's *Memoirs* contain a vast network of words and phrases that are invested with a meaning understandable to Schreber alone. Lacan draws attention to these neologisms or autonyms which for him also come to characterise 'psychosis'. Examples of such isolated fragments of speech include 'nerve-contact', 'diving-rays' or the signifier 'Entmannen/Entmannung' roughly translated as 'unman/unmanning' or to 'emasculate/emasculating'. The crucial point for Lacan is that these signifiers within Schreber's discourse are independent of any referential symbolic order, yet they come to play an important role in reorganising Schreber's subjectivity in the face of foreclosure. In effect they function to compensate for that central organising metaphor, the name-of-the-father. Gradually these autonyms or 'dialectically inert speech elements' (Vanheule, 2011) come together to form the basis for the larger delusional beliefs such as his transformation into a woman and association with the figure of the wandering Jew. This feminine transformation, which represented Schreber's latent homosexuality for Freud, is reworked by Lacan to demonstrate how his transformation was a necessary outcome of the conflict between elements within his intra-psychic constitution. Schreber utilises this delusional signifier, 'Entmannen' as a central axiom for the reconstruction of the universe. The significance of Schreber's supposed emasculation is shown by Lacan (in '*On a Question....*') to be a product of the irresolvable tension of being the phallus for the mother in the absence of a third term to mediate this relation. Schreber is able to reconcile this by radically transforming himself. The significance of this feminine identification is not, therefore, to be found in Schreber's possible homosexual impulses but rather the symbolic value the position of the woman holds for Schreber in his attempts to reconstruct his identity following a loss of phallic meaning.<sup>29</sup>

The question as to why Schreber's 'psychosis' was triggered at the time of his appointment to the Saxon court of appeal is also raised by Lacan. Again, the importance of symbolic

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<sup>29</sup> Unsurprisingly, the centrality of the phallus and the name-of-the-father to Lacan's system here has come in for considerable critique from feminist theorists highlighting the patriarchal terminology and conceptual apparatus that psychoanalysis employs. Elizabeth Grosz's (1990) *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* broaches this very issue and concludes that there is a way in which Lacanian theory can be read as being compatible with feminist perspectives.

identifications is primary as Lacan suggests that, due to the missing signifier for paternity, Schreber was made vulnerable to situations in which he would be called upon to assume a fatherly or authoritative role. In a sense, what Schreber found when he was promoted to this position was a complete lack of support in the symbolic to fulfil this particular mandate. Schreber found the Other - that is, the socio-symbolic structures of language - to be lacking once he was invested with additional symbolic value. Schreber simply could not live up to his new role and his 'psychosis', as characterised by an array of delusions, was an attempt to make sense of his place in this new symbolic life-world. In keeping with his desire to make sense, or to understand his predicament, Lacan suggests that what motivates Schreber to write down his experiences (*das Aufschreibesystem*) and to publish them to the wider world is due to his desire to make his audience into a safe and supportive kind of Other (1959, p.478); presumably an Other who could bear witness to his experience thereby functioning as a substitute for the Other he found to be lacking; an Other characterised by a structural deficit.

We note again the similarity here with Freud's earlier assertion that 'psychosis', or rather the 'work of delusion', effectively serves as a means of support for the psychotic subject. Lacan too highlights the structural similarity that both the delusion and writing have for Schreber. Like Freud, Lacan is here engaged in a form of analysis which is essentially uncovering various mechanism or operations within the text and by implication Schreber's psyche. Lacan's emphasis on the dynamism between signifier and signified already presupposes that meaning is deduced from the interaction between the symbolic representation of a concept (signifier) and the concept itself (signified). It is perhaps not too much of a stretch to say that all of Lacan's analyses or methods of interpretation in the 1950's are built around the notion that conceptual meaning hides behind its surface level, or material level manifestation. His interpretation of Schreber similarly highlights how the content of the *Memoirs* (nerves, rays, soul murder etc.) actually evidences metaphorical operations (name-of-the-father) concealed within the text's depths. We may conclude once again that Lacan and the

wider psychoanalytic tradition in respect of Schreber's *Memoirs* are directly employed in a paranoid reading stance.

But what of the charge that psychoanalysis commits some form of epistemic violence towards Schreber? Does Lacan fare any better than his main theoretical predecessor? The answer is surely, no. Much like Freud, Lacan takes the *Memoirs* and subjects them to a highly abstract intellectual system to derive ever more convoluted, expert theory that in many respects serves to distance Schreber's subjective experience from our appreciation of it. Yet, just as with Freud, Lacan becomes a potential ally to critical psychiatry due to his upending of medicalised understandings of pathology and the ostracising of madness due to his expansion of the category of 'psychosis' to encompass much of the social field. So much so that madness eventually becomes a kind of default position for Lacan. We can appreciate this best by moving now to Lacan's later period from the 1970's onwards where we will see how his analysis shifts from a 'symptomatic reading' of 'psychosis' to one we may term a '*sinthomatic* reading'.

## **2.8 The Later Lacan and Joyce-the-*Sinthome***

If we are to associate the first phase of Lacan's theorisation of 'psychosis' with Schreber and structuralism, then the second belongs to Joyce. The 1950's, which marked Lacan's preoccupation with the symbolic as the primary mode of subjective constitution and relation to the Other, now gives way to the importance of all three psychic registers interacting simultaneously. From the early 1970's and in or around *Seminar XX* (1972-73), Lacan moves away from his previous dialectical logic, pertaining to the tension between his registers in a dual fashion, to a triangular logic as expressed through his use of knots (1972-73). Whereas previously the Imaginary was subordinated to the Symbolic or the Symbolic was situated in relation to the Real, from this point on Lacan begins to theorise all three registers as existing in mutual dependence on each other. Borrowing from mathematical topology, Lacan utilises the trefoil or Borromean knot to elaborate the three-

dimensional constitution of the subject. Crucially, the subject is now perceived to be more than its constitutive parts of the Real, Symbolic and Imaginary, (R S I), and finds its subjective being in the interrelation between all three registers. What crucially binds these registers is something Lacan refers to as the *Sinthome*, a reworking of the French *symptome* which is derived from an archaic spelling but also plays on the polyphonic resonances of 'saint-homme' (saintly-man) or 'synth-homme' (synthetic-man). Strictly speaking the *Sinthome* functions as a fourth ring to the interconnected rings of RSI. The name-of-the-father is now viewed as this fourth ring which provides support to the three registers and Lacan's discussion pertaining to 'psychosis' and Joyce is configured through this notion of the *Sinthome*.

Lacan's daring proposition that Joyce harboured a relation to some form of 'psychosis' is well known. Aside from a chance encounter with Joyce in a Parisian bookshop as a child, Lacan never enjoyed a personal acquaintance with the modernist writer but nevertheless held a lifelong fascination with him. In 1975-76 Lacan entitled his annual seminar *The Sinthome* and based a large part of it on Joyce's life and works. It is these reflections on Joyce that provided Lacan with the means to completely reformulate his notion of 'psychosis'. Whereas previously the traditional binary structure between 'neurosis' and 'psychosis' (marked by the presence or absence of the paternal metaphor) is given prime importance, following Joyce, Lacan develops a universal clinic of foreclosure and attempts to demonstrate that the delusional metaphor is just one amongst a seemingly unending variety of ways in which psychic stabilisation can be realised. In a sense the name-of-the-father acts as just one form of *Sinthome*, one form of binding RSI. So, whereas 'psychosis' initially represented a deficit or deviation from the norm of neurosis, during these later years 'psychosis' shifts to becoming just one way in which the subject is able to respond to a potential loss of phallic meaning. So much so that Lacan famously declared in one of his later

seminars, “that we are all mad, we are all psychotic” (2013, p.3).<sup>30</sup> The relevance of Joyce to this discussion is that, in Lacan’s view, Joyce was able to achieve such stabilisation through his writing. Writing in this instance served as Joyce’s *Sinthome*, it enabled him to bind the three registers and stave off the floridly extraordinary ‘psychotic’ symptoms that so characterised Schreber’s *Memoirs*.

For Lacan, the name-of-the father did not provide the usual support in the symbolic for Joyce as it otherwise should. In reviewing his literary output and the biographic details of his life, Lacan finds the father function curiously missing or absent. Although there are certainly references to the father within Joyce’s work, often they are characterised as being ineffectual or redundant. In *Ulysses* (1922) for example, Vanheule (2011) points to how, when a paternal figure is presented with a structuring role, the father function itself is often negated. Similarly, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and *Finnegan’s Wake* (1939) both portray fathers as weak or incompetent. So far, so familiar. The problematic father role that has accompanied much of our discussion remains present with Lacan’s numerous references to ‘paternal coping out’, or ‘the paternal short comings’ (1975-6, p.97) within Joyce’s literary creations. Yet we must dig a little deeper if we are to appreciate the specificities of Joyce’s ‘psychosis’. What undoubtedly remains remarkable about Joyce’s work is the manner in which he utilised or manipulated language, often resulting in the complete subversion of meaning or accepted discourse. In keeping with this, Lacan identified latent ‘psychotic’ phenomena within Joyce’s use of language, particularly with his so-called “epiphanies”. In an attempt to describe these, Grigg writes that they are formed by “fragments of actual conversations overheard, extracted from their context, and carefully recorded on separate sheets”, many of which

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<sup>30</sup> This expansion of ‘psychosis’ as a category of subject formation has led to a new development within Lacanian theory that articulates the notion of Ordinary Psychosis; a subject position that argues that ‘psychosis’ has become a much more common diagnostic reality where subjects present not with the classic hallmarks of madness such as delusion and paranoia but rather we a discreet set of ways in which they relate to themselves and the world. The most significant line of enquiry within Ordinary Psychosis pertains to the place of the body within this shifting diagnostic landscape. Although initially developed by J. A Miller, the most thorough overview is to be found with J. Redmond’s (2014) *Ordinary Psychosis and The Body* which also details the criticism it has come to receive in particular from Paul Verhaeghe (2004) who puts forth the revitalised idea of the ‘actual neuroses’ as a better model for understanding different contemporary forms of psychopathology.



“were subsequently reinserted unannounced into later texts” (2008, p.21). He goes on to state that “torn from their context, the epiphanies remain nonsensical or enigmatic fragments and are striking for their qualities of incongruity and insignificance” (ibid, p.21). The purpose of Lacan’s drawing attention to these epiphanies is to demonstrate how Joyce takes what should otherwise be considered meaningless, fragments cut off from any identifiable discourse or communication, and reinvests them with importance; he transforms them into “an ineffable revelation” (p.22). Much like Schreber, Joyce invests these isolated fragments of discourse, these ‘dialectically inert elements’, with an almost divine importance. The difference from Schreber is that this meaning is channelled through his writing as opposed to a delusional metaphor. The process whereby Joyce transforms established meaning through his techniques of homophony and intertextuality undoubtedly finds its most complete expression in *Finnegan’s Wake*; a work of literature that completely subverts or indeed destroys linguistic process.

The question of jouissance also plays an important role for Lacan in his reflections on Joyce’s writing. Lacan derives the term ‘jouissance’ from the French for enjoyment. Yet Lacan, over the course of his seminars series, begins to formulate this form of sexual enjoyment as something that goes beyond pleasure, something that by its very nature is transgressive. It is that which the subject has to renounce in order to enter into the symbolic matrix, a renunciation that is predicated on the symbolic castration of the subject which necessitates prohibition from the imaginary phallus. Lacan reasons that whereas Schreber transformed the invasion of jouissance following the loss of phallic meaning into a paranoid transsexual system, Joyce is able to harness this jouissance and rework it into an artistic product. In so doing, Joyce transforms jouissance into a form of ‘enjoy-meant’ (jouissance). In a way he is able to tame it via the signifier, resulting in the most strikingly idiosyncratic linguistic product. By developing this enigmatic literature that is in a sense outside of established

discourse, Joyce paradoxically manages to resuscitate a social link by cultivating his identity as a writer.<sup>31</sup>

Much has been made of Joyce's absolute pre-occupation with the desire to become the great literary name, a writer that others would come to be enthralled and fascinated by, capsulated by his famous wish that his work 'would be studied 300 years from now'. In commenting on this, Lacan identifies the role the ego has to play in Joyce's psychic make-up which doesn't act as it otherwise should, but nevertheless fulfils "an important function in structuring reality" (1975-6, p.147). Joyce was only able to stabilise his psychic world through the elevation of his name as a great writer and as such finds a compensation for his otherwise fragile place within discourse. In the same way that Schreber develops a delusional metaphor to order his world and in some warped sense reorder jouissance, according to Lacan Joyce does so through a writing process which at one and the same time redirects evasive jouissance and elevates his name in order that he can restore a social bond. In commenting on Lacan's seminar on the *Sinthome*, Jacques Alain Miller writes that, for Joyce, "the true name-of-the-father has been his name as a writer. It is his production which permits him to resituate himself in the signified which he lacks. It is the quilting point" (2005, p.27).

Homosexual libidinal desire, the father function, delusional metaphors, the name-of-the-father, *Sinthome* and the role of jouissance - all have been employed by psychoanalysis to theorise what precisely 'psychosis' is and how it has been committed to textual form. Both Freud and Lacan utilised the *Memoirs* of Schreber to excavate, and then elaborate on these conceptual formulations. Both have relied on a method of interpretation which, I would argue, is in itself 'paranoid' in the

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<sup>31</sup> This 'social link' or 'social bond' that Lacan refers to throughout his work is a central concept to many of the themes covered above relating to signifying chains, *Sinthome*'s or the role of jouissance. Although, much like many of his concepts that get reworked or remodelled over the course of his career, this social bond effectively refers to the means by which subjects exists in relation to other subjects via language, desire or the Real dependant on which phase of Lacan's seminar we enter into. That being said, the most complete expression, in my view, of this social bond is to be found in his 17<sup>th</sup> Seminar (1969-70) entitled *The Other side of Psychoanalysis* which puts forth, possibly in response to Foucault's work on discourse, four discursive permutations in which subjects exists in respect of the Symbolic, Knowledge and the Other. Drawing from Hegelian dialectics, Lacan defies the master's discourse, the hysteric's discourse, the analyst's discourse and the university discourse as the four ways in which subject formation occurs and the way in which the social field is constructed.

manner that Sedgwick frames it to further their respective projects. Schreber's psychoanalytic popularity serves us as the first of our sites of wider psychosocial theory that have drawn explicitly from 'psychotic' text. As we move on now to interpretations that exist outside the psychoanalytic cannon to other areas of psychosocial theory, I want to keep in mind these prominent attempts that not only disclose the stabilising effect 'psychotic' text can have on its author but also the way in which the Schreber text has itself almost become taken over by psychoanalytic understanding. Divorcing it from the legacies of Freud, and to a lesser extent Lacan, is no easy task. Although Schreber may have been repeatedly drawn upon to bolster the claims of psychoanalytic knowledge, as we move forward over the coming chapters, we shall see that he has also been utilised to highlight psychoanalysis' inherent shortcomings. With respect to my central research questions as to the possibility of performing interpretations on mad writing, we have to conclude from Freud and Lacan's studies that psychoanalysis, at least in regard to Schreber, undeniably does commit such forms of violence. Stripped of context and devoid of any consideration as to how Schreber himself may have wanted his writing utilised, Freud and Lacan's readings are the readings of clinicians, experts or intellectuals seeking to further their respective projects on the back of Schreber's textual output. Yet I maintain that psychoanalysis, due to its upending of normality and pathology, via Freud's comments about the delusion of philosophy or Lacan's statement concerning the ubiquity of 'psychosis', allows some space for madness to come 'back in' to thought or discourse, and as such, potentially aligns itself with the ethical impulse at the heart of the Mad Studies project.



### Chapter 3: Schreber, Modernism and the *Aufschreibsystem*

The preceding chapter detailed how ‘mad writing’ in the form of Schreber’s *Memoirs* has been instrumental in elaborating theories of ‘psychosis’ within both Freud and Lacan’s systems of thought. In this chapter I want to turn away from strictly clinical interpretations of the *Memoirs* to forms of analysis that we may begin to term as psychosocial and ones that crucially align the *Memoirs* with the context in which they were produced. In this sense the following analyses of Schreber are concerned with historicising him and his paranoid world system. The works of Louis Sass (2017), Eric Santner (1996) and Friedrich Kittler (1985) will collectively comprise this chapter. Despite their different approaches, I trace the themes and investments uncovered within Schreber’s writing by these different theorists whose works attempt to engage with the question of ‘modernism’. Accordingly, Schreber’s writing will be shown to reflect both the specific socio-political themes present during this historical period as well as being an instructive example of much wider alterations within modern articulations of language and culture.<sup>32</sup>

Arising from these discussions several important elements will emerge. Namely, that Schreber’s writing, both in terms of its content and form, speaks to drastic social and political changes that occurred towards the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth century; changes concerned with a societal crisis centred on the transfer of power and the deficiencies of bureaucratic control. In addition, the development of new media technologies gave rise to radically different forms of cultural communication characterised by the processes of automation and separation permeating through Schreber’s text. Schreber’s *Memoirs* will, therefore, be shown to

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<sup>32</sup>It is worth drawing attention here to the distinction between my employment of the terms ‘modern’ and ‘modernist’. Although I do at times use both terms interchangeably there are important differences. In referring to ‘modern’ I am essentially denoting a period of time beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century through to start of the Second World War that coincided with a rapid rise in forms of technological, industrial, communicative and corresponding social development. The term ‘modernist’ is used to describe the relation to these changes as conceived within forms of art, literature and culture at large both as response and critique of such societal developments.

have a value beyond the clinic as his writing is held up as an exemplar of different modernist themes that suture his individual subjectivity to wider cultural domains.

### 3.2 Schreber & the Panopticon

My starting point for examining different theorists who have used Schreber's *Memoirs* to further forms of psychosocial theory is Louis Sass (2017), psychologist and author of *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in The Light of Modern Art, Literature and Thought*. His widely celebrated text, which draws parallels between many of the clinical insights on the nature of 'schizophrenia' and crucial aspects of the modernist aesthetic, has become a key reference in any discussion on the use of psychiatric diagnostic entities to critique culture at large. Ranging between modes of modernist art and literature, Sass's main thesis is that the phenomenological experience of 'schizophrenia', 'manic depression' and 'psychosis' more generally fundamentally aligns with the extreme relativism, distortions of time and strange transformations of self that occur in the works of Kafka, Beckett and Duchamp, as well as within various examples of modernist philosophy.<sup>33</sup>

In Schreber's 'psychotic' writing, Sass finds an intriguing link to what he frames as a key characteristic of the modernist experience of self; an experience that Foucault principally lays out in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Sass begins his analysis of Schreber's text by acknowledging the highly irregular nature of his script that darts between "certainty and tentativeness", "the literal and the abstract" and the "lucid and the utterly bizarre" (2017, p.243). Evelyn Keitel's (1989) assertion that 'psychotic' text can have a particularly disorienting effect on the reader echoes Sass's experience of the Schreber material. For Sass, Schreber's mad writing oscillates between various dichotomous poles resulting in a discomfiting reading experience. Yet the further Sass delves into the text, he acknowledges "the more difficult it becomes to dismiss the hope for achieving some kind of

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<sup>33</sup> It is worth noting again the relevance of feminist critique here. Although wide ranging in examining sources of modernist art, it is striking that very few female artists or writers are commented upon. There is no mention for instance of Virginia Woolf's work in the context of modernist literature's link to transformations of self or defiance of convention!

interpretative or empathic understanding” (2017, p.244). The ‘psychotic’ writing of Schreber, in this instance, appears to actively invite Sass to construct some form of interpretation the longer he spends analysing it. Such an understanding, for Sass, is ultimately found in Schreber’s documented capacity for hyper-reflexivity; a condition that closely aligns to the workings of power and knowledge within emerging modern societies that Foucault argues to be so central to modernity itself. In keeping with this insight, and quite in contrast to medical science’s attempts to relegate ‘psychosis’ or madness to the fringes of rationality and reason, Sass boldly states that, “the most autistic delusional system may be uncannily reminiscent of the public world, mirroring social practices and mores in the innermost chambers of the self” (ibid, p.246). The psychosocial characteristic of such a statement is quite evident. Schreber’s ‘mirroring’, for Sass, reveals the workings of modernity’s tendency towards hyper-reflexivity, self-realisation and the dynamics of surveillance and control; tendencies encapsulated in the Foucault’s famous use of the Panopticon.<sup>34</sup> Sass’s central argument, therefore, is that Schreber’s ‘inner most chambers of the self’ reveal to us the modern workings of power and knowledge which condition a specific form of subjectivity predicated on a dyad between observer and observed, or rather between self and other.

Foucault (1975) presented Jeremy Bentham’s speculative architectural design for the optimum arrangement of a prison or disciplinary regime as a model for modern society at large. Conditioned by an absolute separation between observer and the observed, it functioned by instilling within the prisoner, or subjects of the institution, a capacity for self-regulation as they would be unaware of when they were or were not being observed. This constant level of surveillance by an unknown authority or central organising power effectively creates conditions for the ongoing self-management of one’s own behaviour due to an inability to ever know when we can and cannot let our guard down. Sass quotes Foucault’s description of the Panopticon as follows: “a machine for

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<sup>34</sup> Sass (1993) has similarly drawn parallels between Schreber’s and others delusional narratives with the work of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. By focusing on ‘reality-testing’ both within the hyper-rational philosopher’s thought and Schreber’s delusional system, Sass concludes that such testing ultimately leads one to paradox.

dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower one sees everything without ever being seen” (2017, p.252). An all-seeing gaze is established for Foucault in modern society by various different disciplinary structures or practices and this gaze is ultimately able to condition, discipline and fashion bodies and their behaviours. Sass’s argument is that the central elements to Schreber’s delusional and paranoid world view (the nerves, rays and gods we covered in the last chapter) effectively ‘mirror’ this reflexive mechanism at the heart of a distinctively modern form of consciousness and subjectivity. In his own word Sass states that his goal is to:

show how these strange quasi-cosmological entities [nerves, rays etc.] - which suggest a kind of weird planetary system existing in a reified, external space – must be read as symbolic representations of aspects of Schreber’s own consciousness, a conscious both rent and joined by an inner panopticism. Whereas the nerves represent the part of the mind that is observed – self-as-object – the rays represent the part the *does* the *observing* – self-as-subject (p.253).

For Sass, this dualism between Schreber’s preoccupation between the ‘rays’ and ‘God’ explicitly references the self-awareness (or what Sass refers to as ‘meta-awareness’) that is such a hallmark of modernity. Sass draws on numerous passages within the *Memoirs*, whereby Schreber discusses the proximity and omniscience of his god, which oscillates between a great distance and an apparent immediacy with the associated capacity for entering into Schreber’s internal mental life. Sass highlights the following to evidence this constant back and forth dynamic characterised by separation and closeness: amongst the voices Schreber hears is the voice of God stating that “I who am distant” (1903, p.160, 191) and of the rays who refer to God as “the one who retires to an enormous distance”. At the same time, Schreber refers to God having the ability to access his innermost thoughts when he writes that it is “always *possible* for God to get to know the inner person through nerve-contact, whenever the need arose” (p.54). For Schreber, the nerves or god of which he speaks are able to read his internal thoughts but they also exist at great distance from him. This paradoxical situation lends support to the first level of Sass’s argument whereby he aligns the



*Memoirs* and Schreber's overall experience with a modern distinction between self and other. For Sass, Schreber's internal mental life is split between his own thoughts and an agency he projects out from himself in the form of his 'god' or 'nerve-body'. This split or distinction between them is, according to Sass, instructive of one's capacity for inner speech and the ability to then reflect on it. In short, an acutely reflexive mind. Sass writes:

As we have seen, the nerves constitute a kind of foundational level of experience in which are expressed the relatively "spontaneous" thoughts that are the *object* of scrutiny. Over these nerve-thoughts hover the rays, the part of the mind that actively monitors what takes place below, in the realm of inner speech. In his dichotomous ontology we discern the same vexed schism that is brought about by the Panopticon (2017, p.249).

The relevance of this argument to our psychosocial focus is that Sass is effectively stating that Schreber's projection of his inner psychological state via his writing and delusional cosmology evidences a very modern form of subjectivity, one built around the power/knowledge nexus that Foucault elaborates via Bentham's design. It is not just a paranoid representation of general psychology, but rather a specific commentary on modern forms of subjectivity. In Sass's work, we perhaps have the beginnings of a general appreciation of Schreber's relation to modernism and the ability of the *Memoirs* to bridge strictly individual psychological life and the social world of power, knowledge and intersubjective relations. In order to further develop the value of Schreber's text to uncovering the workings of modernism as well as the role of power or authority in our construction of self, we can turn now to another prominent Schreber scholar.

### **3.3 Santner's 'Crisis of Symbolic Investiture'**

The work of Eric L. Santner offers us a particularly useful example of how a psychosocial reading of 'psychotic' text may be performed. Although he too situates Schreber's *Memoirs* as a particularly revealing example of modernity, he differs from Sass quite considerably, in that Santner's (1996) reading of the *Memoirs* align Schreber with very specific political or ideological developments that took place within a precise moment in German history. Whereas Sass associates

the *Memoirs* within perhaps a more general tendency towards modernist sensibilities concerned with hyper-reflexivity and forms of consciousness, Santner effectively reads Schreber as a profound document on German cultural history. Most importantly for this thesis, Santner is able to use his knowledge of German history to illustrate how Schreber is illustrative of a link between the psychic and the social. In fact, we could argue that what lies at the core of all of Santner's intellectual work is a concern that places him firmly within a psychosocial terrain.<sup>35</sup>

From his initial work on the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig (2001) through to his formulation of 'creaturely life' (2006) and his concept of 'Flesh' (2011), Santner has repeatedly dealt with this relation between the space of representation concerned with ideology, politics or history and the way this can become manifest in various personal, intrapsychic or indeed bodily enactments. We could also note the role psychoanalysis has played on Santner's wider theoretical formulations, as he consistently draws on the works of Freud and Lacan to emphasise how their theories pertaining to libidinal investment (1932) and the social bond (1969-70) allow one to make the bridge between the social world of the symbolic and the private world of the subject. Indeed, Lacan's conceptualisation of the Symbolic is indispensable to any appreciation of Santner's works concerned with 'roles and mandates' that can then correlate to particular elements of psychic life. Santner's investigation into Schreber is one example of how we can reconsider previous distinctions between individual psychological life and wider societal functioning. By shifting attention towards particular historical developments that took place in *fin de siècle* Saxon Germany, Santner (1996) demonstrates how the content of Schreber's delusional paranoia is directly inflected or imbued with larger ideological or discursive themes. So, whereas Lacan's analysis focuses upon the underlying mechanism within Schreber's intra-psychic structure, Santner demonstrates how Schreber's crisis in symbolic

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<sup>35</sup> This concern, as Santner frames it, deals explicitly with the difficulty in accounting for how anomalies or impasses within social space can come to result in the reorganisation of psychic structure; or as he questions, "how is it that a disturbance in *the space of representation* – the space in which we engage with one another by way of offices, titles, symbolic roles and mandates, generic predicates of all kinds – can generate (or more cautiously, be correlated to) *a nervous disorder*?" (2011, p.xviii).

functioning mirrors a much wider crisis at the turn of the century; a crisis whereby symbolic forms of authority were themselves in a state of emergency. The notion of Schreber's writing acting as a sort of 'echo-chamber' is encapsulated by Santner when he writes, "I call this world Schreber's 'own private Germany' because of his profound attunement to the exemplarity of the crisis he was undergoing, its resonances with the larger social and cultural crises of his era" (p.16). Schreber's 'private Germany' is one that enacts and effectively reformulates the social field in which he is immersed. For Santner, Schreber's 'private Germany' is a reconstituted or refracted version of German society at large. Therefore, it can be read as a revealing, or especially telling, cultural commentary that does away with any notion of it being a mere example of pathological functioning.

Santner touches upon the numerous analyses that have been performed on Schreber's writing whilst arguing that each of them have missed a crucial component to the *Memoirs*; most notably, that Schreber's attempt to recover from a crisis in his socio-symbolic world through a complex delusional system is not only an attempt to provide meaning to his existence but, importantly, that this meaning is constructed according to the overriding political situation in which he resides. Here Santner emphasises how various connections have been made between the Schreber material and the "social and political fantasies at work in Nazism" (p.xi). In this vein, he explores the work of Elias Canetti (1960) who attempted to highlight the similarity between Schreber's writing and the paranoid stance of Nazi ideology.<sup>36</sup> The proto-fascist underpinnings to Schreber's delusions, that Canetti argues for, are noted by Santner but he distances himself from such a reading by wishing to emphasise how the crisis in symbolic space that lent itself to authoritarian social control (in the case of German national socialism) is refracted through Schreber's writing. It is this 'hollowing out' of the social order predicated on the collapse of socio-symbolic authority that is of particular interest to Santner. As such, Santner situates Schreber's 'psychosis' in relation to a 'crisis of symbolic investiture' or a crisis in the transfer of symbolic power

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<sup>36</sup> In his work *Crowds and Power*, Elias Canetti (1960) describes how power permeates through crowds or large groupings and draws on the writing of Schreber to outline a theory of the 'paranoid despot' that is able to exert power over such crowds.

and authority. That allows him to bridge the crisis within German society of the time and the personal crisis that profoundly affected Schreber that led to him being interned within the asylum. This 'crisis of symbolic investiture' is, for Santner, the same mechanism operating within Schreber's psychic life and within wider German society. It is this mechanism that conjoins both of these realms within Schreber's overall sense of subjectivity. One avenue for appreciating this link that conjoins Schreber and society at large is via Santner's focus on the body.

By way of an example I want to focus on Schreber's preoccupation with degeneration during his mutation into 'God's own concubine'. Santner's (1996) analysis focuses in on Schreber's assertion of himself as an "abject bearer of rotting flesh" as best exemplified through his self-identification with the signifier '*Luder*', connoting themes of disease and wretchedness. What Santner wishes to show however, is that Schreber's fixation on 'rotting putrefying flesh' was due to his incapacity to fulfil the symbolic title bestowed upon him. What Schreber discovered was an inability to inhabit and to feel libidinally implicated in the space of representation resulting in his 'excitation of nerves' and the corresponding 'wasting away' of his material presence. Schreber's own experience of his material corporeal body is inextricably bound up within the titles or symbolic mandates in which it is inscribed. The body is, in this sense, overwritten by signifiers and the cataclysm that Schreber experiences within the Symbolic comes to take on a material bodily presence. The wasting away and degeneration of his own flesh here correspond precisely to his inability to localise his libido on the title or symbolic mandate demanded of him. Here we have one specific instance of how the body, or 'vicissitudes of the flesh' as Santner puts it, are concrete materialisations of performative utterances emanating from the world of the Symbolic. As we have seen, due to the foreclosure of the paternal metaphor, Schreber suffers a complete collapse of such symbolically mediated relations when tasked with assuming a particular societal mandate, in this case the presiding judge of the Supreme Court of Appeals. It is the question of symbolic authority and the position of power from which Schreber is asked to speak that is of prime importance in Santner's analysis. Santner wishes to show

that it is the body which functions as the site through which symbolic predicates come to be interpreted or enacted upon. The symbolic order, in a sense, operates through the body and the body is in turn shaped or formed by these very operations.

The link to wider societal functioning arrives when we appreciate how the social field was also characterised at this particular historical moment with a concern for a change, or rather degeneration, within the 'body politique'. As we have noted, the inability to assume this position of power or authority results, for Schreber, in a complex multifaceted delusional system that incorporates religious, sexual and racial overtones. Through a nuanced analysis that integrates Foucault's (1976) theory of sexuality and disciplinary control, Santner moves on to unpick the content of Schreber's writings, particularly that which pertains to his 'un-manning' (*entmannen*), his feminine identification and his association with the figure of the 'wandering Jew'. This diverse intersection of race, sex and gender becomes manifest in Schreber's delusion of bodily transformations. What is absolutely crucial to Santner's analysis is that this process reflects much wider societal connections between circumcision, feminization and anti-Semitism. In effect, Schreber's 'psychotic' universe is directly influenced by the broader societal processes at work in nineteenth century Germany. By drawing on various historical sources, Santner demonstrates how the perceived social and cultural crisis effecting German society at the time was marked by ideas of degeneration, disease and the loss of masculine identity. Although these developments are perhaps attributable to other contexts outside of German society, for Santner they coalesce most profoundly within Germany via the feminised image of the Jew that was so prominent during Schreber's historical moment. It was this marginal figure or 'outsider identity' that Schreber primarily associated with when he found his symbolic life world radically threatened; or put differently, when he transgressed the social pact on which his identity was founded. The crucial point being that for Schreber and Saxon Germany alike, the resultant preoccupations with a degenerate body, or the wasting away of the flesh, is due to the same underlying operation, or rather failure of operation; a

fundamental impasse or catastrophe that occurs within the field of symbolic authority that then takes on bodily or corporeal connotations. We might be alerted here to some degree of crossover with Sass's argument above. Although coming from different perspectives, both Santner and Sass have located the workings of power and resultant positions of subjectivity as being key to Schreber's mental state. For Sass and Santner alike, Schreber is commenting not just on his own particular psychology, but the intricacies of modern forms of power/knowledge that comprise such a psychology. It is these dynamics that are essentially underwritten by an intersubjective domain mediated via language, the gaze, or in the widest possible sense, the realm of the Symbolic. And this is what Schreber is witness to, albeit in some warped or heightened sense.

The world of politics and ideological authority is for Santner, just as with Sass, key to decoding Schreber's paranoid worldview. He writes at the beginning of his reading that what drives his work is a belief that Schreber's "impasses and conflicts pertain to shifts in the fundamental matrix of the individual's relation to social and institutional authority; to the ways he or she is addressed by and responds to the calls of 'official' power and authority" (1996, p.xi). Schreber's inability to participate with these procedures of symbolic investiture has a structural affinity with the same 'investiture crisis' occurring at this precise historical moment. As he writes:

One of the central theoretical lessons of the Schreber case is precisely that a generalized attenuation of symbolic power and authority can be experienced as the collapse of social space and the rites of institution into the most intimate core of ones being. The feelings generated thereby are as we shall see, anxieties not of absence and loss but of over proximity, loss of distance to some obscene and malevolent presence that appears to have a direct hold on one's inner parts (pxii).

Schreber's numerous comments related to his body wasting away, his internal organs being rearranged or indeed the cursed and spiteful god that is responsible for these heinous acts is, for Santner, a representation, or rather a personally inhabited metaphor, for the collapse of power and authority altogether - a representation that is internalised on a bodily level. Schreber literally embodies this metaphor and instates this failure pertaining to symbolic operations within his material, fleshy self.

In order to develop this line of argument further, Santner draws on various cultural artefacts and literary sources from the era that mirror Schreber's paranoid delusions and the state of social decline. Utilising the work of Franz Kafka, he emphasises how his "prose is largely a meditation on communities in chronic states of crisis, communities in which the force of social laws no longer stands in any relation to the meaningfulness of their content and the traditions from which they derive" (p.12). Citing works such as *The Trial* (1914) and *Metamorphosis* (1915) he shows how these narratives portray "institutional authority with a dimension of obscene inscrutability often linked to impotence, inconsistency, and debility on the part of that very authority" (p.13). This notion of institutional authority and the 'force of law' containing some traumatic 'rotten' core that contests any idea of a harmonious social structure is further developed through Walter Benjamin's (1986) influential essay *Critique of Violence*, and later Derrida's (1992) work concerning similar themes. Santner maintains that Schreber's transgression of the social order and the authority on which it is founded is due to an over proximity to this 'rotten core'. And it is through the maddening or bewildering prose of Kafka, for instance, that we can come to better realise Schreber's direct experience as predicated upon the turmoil present within social, political or economic spheres. Ultimately, Santner's 'crisis of investiture' references both the individual chaos faced by Schreber, owing to the breakdown in his symbolic world, and the collapse of symbolic functioning within wider society. Interestingly, both are shown to mask or compensate for this symbolic crisis through very similar preoccupations centred on Jewishness with associated gendered or sexual connotations. Freud's earlier remark that Schreber's delusions may contain 'more truth than people are led to believe' resonates loudly with Santner's reading.

### **3.4 Kittler, Discourse Networks & Madness**

Santner's analysis of the *Memoirs* leads him to suggest that Schreber's 'psychotic' writing in a sense refracts modernism whilst also containing the core ideological investments of late nineteenth century Saxon Germany; notions of degeneracy, a loss of masculine identity and the

localisation of such themes in the figure of the feminised Jew. Contained within Santner's analysis is a reference to Friedrich Kittler who, likewise, in his elaboration of media technologies and 'Discourse Networks' takes Schreber's *Memoirs* and demonstrates how they are similarly imbued with a modernist sensibility. I wish to turn to Kittler's (1985) analysis here, whilst also focusing on the role that Schreber's *Aufschreibsystem* (writing-down-system) plays in understanding certain facets of modernity related to automation and technology. This will also offer us another avenue for understanding how the 'psychotic' text of Daniel Paul Schreber can be read psychosocially and reveal aspects of culture or society that have come to shape individual subjectivity. We will also note the impact Kittler's work has had on Santner's reading to the point whereby both theorists start to circle very similar issues. So much so that it is worth conjoining Santner's and Kittler's work to close this chapter. Before doing so, however, I want to describe Kittler's overall intellectual framework as, without this, we may struggle to appreciate the means by which he is able to conjoin the subject to the social via his focus on media technologies. We will return to the *Memoirs* following this digression into Kittler's conceptualisation of 'discourse networks' and their relation to madness.

Kittler, owing to his eclectic use of theoretical reference points and interdisciplinary style, is not easily placed within neat academic categorisation. He has, in turn, been labelled the foremost German post-structuralist and one of its most prominent media theorists. His unique approach has as much in common, however, with the mathematical communicational theories of Norbert Wiener as it does with the usual mix of various German philosophers (Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger) and members of the French avant-garde (Foucault, Lacan, Derrida) that would otherwise place him solely within the field of critical theory. To date, he has received mixed attention in the English-speaking world, remaining something of a fringe or cult figure although his influence could be argued to be on the rise.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Winthrop-Young (2011), perhaps Kittler's most prominent commentator in English, attempts to summarise his career and distinguishes between three clear periods within his overall work; the first which lasted from the mid 1970's through to the early 1980's was primarily concerned with texts, or rather on the *discourse*



In his celebrated book *Discourse Networks, 1800/1900* Kittler (1985) engages with a number of literary works in order to demonstrate the way in which language, meaning and speech acts that make up any given culture are subject to drastic changes, especially within regard to the emergence of different technological capabilities and institutional practices. He defines such 'discourse networks' as "the network of technologies and institutions that allow a given culture to select, store and process relevant data" (1985, p.369). For Kittler, discourse networks come to embody certain cultural forms that are able to reflect the media conditions under which they themselves are produced. Kittler portrays culture as a massive store house of information, or rather a machine, that depending on the way in which 'data' is disseminated through, is capable of altering conceptions of what it means to be a subject (or in Kittlerese a 'so-called man') within specific historical conditions. The first half of the book contains a detailed analysis of various German authors such as E.T.A Hoffman, Goethe and von Humboldt. The major focus, however, is on how, in the latter part of the eighteenth-century, changes within education resulted in significant modifications in language teaching and practice. The role of mothers here becomes especially significant, as Kittler argues that rather than having children learn language via rote repetition of formal words and phonemes, a new practice of mothers giving voice to what he terms 'minimal signifieds' was introduced. Simply put, these 'minimal signifieds' are neither real words nor meaningless sounds but something located in between.<sup>38</sup> The importance, however, is that the repetition of such terms, as well as the accumulation of them, leads to rudimentary language formation invested with a level of meaning - the repetition of *ma* for example leading to *Mama* and consequently 'mother'. Kittler states "in this way meanings come into being on the border between sound and word through the augmentation

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*analysis* (archaeology) of specifically literary texts. The second period, carrying on through the 1980's and 1990's, focused on *media technologies* such as the analogue media of the late nineteenth century (phonography, cinema, and mechanised writing as evidenced by the typewriter) and then, most recently, his last period focused on digital technology. His analysis of Schreber's *Memoirs* straddles these two earlier periods.

<sup>38</sup> The similarity here to Lacan's concept of *Lalangue* is worth stating. Lacan in the 1970's spent considerable effort theorising a form of *jouissance* enacted in language but one that did not accord to the play of signifiers. This language without meaning is found in the pre-linguistic sounds an infant makes and also in instances of psychotic speech. See J. Lacan (1972-73) *Encore. Seminar XX*. Norton: London.

of minimal signifieds” (p. 78). The mother becomes the primary vehicle via which such meanings can be enacted. This social bond assures that these newly acquired semantic skills are at one level forever tied to the mother’s body. And it is from here that Kittler is able to show how language practices, as dictated by ‘Discourse Network 1800’, are closely associated to maternal figures and ideas of nature. E.T.A Hoffman’s (1814) tale *The Golden Pot* is thoroughly analysed to this very effect. This immense circuitry of reading, writing and speaking is subsequently understood as a machinic system characterised as “an endless oscillating from Nature to books and back to Nature” (p.91). The second half of Kittler’s work concerns the replacement of various writing technologies of ‘Discourse Network 1800’ with the analogue media of ‘Discourse Network 1900’. This transition of modern communicative technologies ushers in a reconfiguration of culture and the subjects that inhabit it. The relevance of Schreber, and what Kittler describes as a ‘simulacrum of madness’, to this shift in discursive possibilities is important. Before discussing Schreber it may be worth examining a text that Kittler (1982) holds up as being emblematic of ‘Discourse Network 1900’ with its concern for new media-technologies and their relation to specific regimes of madness; Bram Stoker’s (1899) *Dracula*.

The story is well known; following the arrival of Jonathan Harker to the count’s castle whereby plans are made for the latter’s journey to England, Dracula begins to exert a form of telepathic control over Renfeld, an apparently insane man who quickly ends up interned in a London asylum whilst raving about the arrival of his ‘master’ - Dracula himself. Renfeld’s inability to coordinate his own behaviour and speech quickly results in him being labelled ‘mad’. In this vein, madness is as Winthrop-Young states, “the apparent inability to control one’s speech, especially if that very lack of control is central to what you are trying to say” (2011, p.66). And this is precisely one of the central elements at play for Kittler within modern forms of communication and media; namely, the manner by which modern discourse channels conditions that are capable of separating the conscious speaking subject from the control of his own discourse. In keeping with Stoker’s tale,

Kittler examines the new forms of writing and communication technology present within it, particularly the typewriter, as exemplified in Mina Harker's correspondence with her husband and Dr Seward's phonograph with which he attempts to practice his own version of the 'talking cure'. Indeed, these new-fangled inventions come to be paradigmatic examples of modern forms of communication that accord to the twin processes of separation and discontinuity.<sup>39</sup> Whereas 'Discourse Network 1800' was characterised by the continuous smooth flow of information from mother/nature via handwriting practises, 'Discourse Network 1900' is fragmentary and impersonal, following the introduction of standardised mechanical forms of language and the technological ability to communicate whilst remaining physically separated.

If this 'inability to control one's speech', as illustrated by Renfeld's delusional ravings, is to become a feature of modern forms of communication, then it also follows that this will necessitate a reconfiguration of the social bond and the wider socio-cultural formations arising from it. The tight knit relation between modern media technology and the separation of the conscious speaker from their own discourse ensures that modern forms of discourse start to resemble madness itself. In commenting on this, Winthrop-Young states, "the Discourse Network 1900 reveals madness – the inability to produce discourse as individual speech acts – to be the true state of affairs" (2011, p.69). Indeed, his analysis of Kittler's work at times leads him to raise an implied question within Kittler's thought (one very much in the style of Foucauldian conceptions of madness) as he asks:

what sounds mad in the age of reason? Answer: madness is the compulsive, incessant talking about the rules, protocols, and institutions that make us talk [...]. Obviously, branding this as madness presupposes that sane discourses are perceived to be individual speech acts presided over by an autonomous subject.

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<sup>39</sup> Regarding this, Partington (2006) writes the following, "the spectre at the heart of Stoker's story is that of modern technology rather than atavistic evil. The late nineteenth century's bureaucratic revolution involved the incursion of writing machines not merely into the workplace, but into the fabric of existence, producing new writing and writers [...], and for Kittler, it is the shock of this technocultural transformation that Stoker's novel registers: it depicts a world that is recognizable as historical reality, but is at the same time unfamiliar and aggressively technologized populated by machines that encroach into all areas of life and choreograph new types of behaviour and social formations" (p.53).

Sanity means being in control of what you say; madness is the compulsion to incessantly talk about that which makes you talk (2011, p.57).

Media technology and the resultant effect on the social bond brings 'Discourse Network 1900' in line with what Kittler refers to as a 'simulacrum of madness'. We have then the theoretical framework Kittler adopts to align modern forms of technological communication with madness itself. Yet, if we really wish to appreciate how Schreber's 'psychotic' writing bears witness to these drastic changes in media technology and resultant forms of subjectivity, then we must delve further into one crucial aspect of his memoirs: his *Aufschreibsystem*, which Kittler also adopts as the German title of his 1985 book.

### 3.5 *Aufschreibsystem*

Schreber begins the ninth chapter of his *Memoirs* by offering an account of what he terms the *Aufschreibsystem*, roughly translated as the 'writing-down system'. He described it as follows:

Books or other notes are kept in which for years have been written-down all my thoughts, all my phrases, all my necessities, all the articles in my possession or around me, all persons with whom I come into contact, etc. I cannot say with certainty who does the writing down. As I cannot imagine God's omnipotence lacks all intelligence, I presume that the writing down is done by creatures given human shape on distant celestial bodies after the manner of the fleeting-improvised-men, but lacking all intelligence; their hands are led automatically, as it were, by passing rays for the purpose of making them write down, so that later rays can again look at what has been written (1903, p.123)

We notice here already how for Schreber, this system of writing, the way in which his thoughts are recorded, is not attributable to anyone in particular, least of all himself. Yet what is taking place here has been argued by many to be crucial in establishing some form of stability for Schreber in ordering his world (see for Example, Butler, 2008).<sup>40</sup> Just as Freud emphasised the stabilising quality of the delusion itself, we can situate this writing-down-system as having a similar effect in gaining or harnessing power over the disruption and fragmentation that threatens to engulf both Schreber's

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<sup>40</sup> Butler (2008) writes that, "By creating his writing-down system through his *Memoirs*, Schreber invests himself with power. He discerns how nervous energy circulates in the universe, and, having identified the "Technik" (technique/technology) [...] at work, he knows how to counteract the disruption of his body and mind by intruding rays" (p.177).

mind and body. This is the element that Kittler finds so important in arguing for the significance of the *Aufschreibsystem* to modern forms of communication per se. Not only does 'discourse network 1900' function via separation and automation, it instates writing practices, or rather recording practices, whereby information comes to be collated and organised against a 'white noise' or background of communicational chaos. The 'simulacrum of madness' that is 'discourse network 1900' has to be tamed via such a method of inscription. Schreber's ordering of his cosmology via his writing directly, for Kittler, mirrors the way in which modern forms of data processing, analysing and storing essentially sort information from the maddening proliferation of ever-expanding discourse channels. Schreber himself goes further to explain how this process of writing assists him in gaining some mastery over the chaos surrounding him. He refers in his *Memoirs* to a process in tandem with the *Aufschreibsystem* that he terms *Zeichnen* (1903, p.210), sometimes misleadingly translated as 'picturing'. This 'picturing' (or perhaps more accurately translated as the literal act of drawing), relates to Schreber describing nothing more than his own imagination i.e. the idea of summing up mental images within one's mind. The difference for Schreber is that these images or drawings take on a real material significance; he quite literally draws them into the world and reality at large. Other examples whereby Schreber refers to the process of organising his thoughts with great precision via inscription methods include his technique of writing "under consecutive numbers and with dates, thoughts about impressions gained, about possible future developments, etc. in the form of little studies" (p.173; n.80). The point in highlighting these attempts by Schreber to order his universe via a method of writing, is that Kittler sees in this technique something that is instructive of something far larger than one individual patient's attempts to overcome their paranoia. Just as Sass believes that Schreber is effectively mirroring a much more general characteristic of modern forms of consciousness, this automatic inscription practice becomes indicative, for Kittler, of modern forms of communication in keeping with the notions of separation and displacement already highlighted.<sup>41</sup> As

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<sup>41</sup> The relevance of Schreber and Madness more generally to Kittler's work is explored by S. Connor (2015) in his *Scilicet: Kittler, Media and Madness*. Connor argues that "Schreber's systematic account of his delusional

he states, “[a] delirium written down coincides with what sciences and media themselves were doing” (1985, p.305).

### 3.6 Kittler/Santner/Schreber

There is one last area we need to cover to close the relevance of Schreber’s writing to specifically psychosocial forms of analysis concerned with his modernist relevance. It is an area that both Santner and Kittler circle respectively and one that ultimately ties their work together, as their respective focus on automation/separation and the collapse of symbolic functioning meet. Kittler sees in Schreber’s inscription practice a telling detail that registers with his much wider investigation into modern forms of communication; the already commented upon split between speaker and discourse resulting in language coming to take on an automated quality. It is not just this comparison, however, that peaks Kittler’s interest but, in a similar vein to Santner, he emphasises how Schreber’s automated writing, which drains the agentic capacity of the writer, mirrors his treating physician Dr Flechsig’s neuroanatomical model of the mind. Santner draws attention to Kittler’s use of this theme when he writes, “the crucial feature of this registration system is its purely *mechanical and automatic* nature, specifically the absence of any animating soul or spirit” (1996, p.74). This loss of soul, or *Geist*, is in some sense the structural equivalent to Flechsig’s own influential thinking on the nature of the mind/body duality, as contained in his book *Gehirn Und Seele* (Brain and Soul) published in 1896. Flechsig’s contribution to physiology and neurology during this period offered a framework for understanding subjectivity as being “dissolved into systems of *information transfer*” (ibid. p.71) whereby any ‘animating spirit’ is eliminated in favour of strict biological causality. The body and its conscious mind accords, therefore, to a kind of automaton reacting simply to an underlying neuroanatomical technical procedure. Schreber’s *seelenmord* (‘soul-

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system provides more than a symptomatic registration of the awareness of new recording technologies. It is at the heart of Kittler’s understanding of the drastic shift from one system of inscription to another that took place following the development, from the 1870’s onwards, of apparatuses that allowed the storage and manipulation, not just of words, but of sound and of moving image” (p.118).

murder') in this sense corresponds to a quite literal reduction of the human subject to its materialistic effects. Santner again commenting on his close theoretical ally writes:

Kittler's thesis is that both Flechsig and Schreber elaborate in their writing a universe in which the symbolic-spiritual dimension – *Geist* – in its radical heterogeneity with regard to organic processes has been nullified. As Schreber's text amply demonstrates, once the symbolic dimension collapses into the domain of bodily causes, we are in a universe of extreme *literalisation*, where words are assimilated to things that in turn produce immediate alternations in the body (p.75).

This separation or gap between bodily cause and meaning as arising from symbolic effect is, as Santner so aptly demonstrates, the truly 'psychotic' element at play in Flechsig's theory and Schreber's delusion. Both attempt a kind of short circuit, or a 'traumatic collapse' between these sites resulting in an automated mechanical view of the subject as expressed via his very own writing method. Meaning becomes nothing more than the direct lifeless consequence of physiological processes. Following Santner and Kittler, we can come to appreciate how Schreber's writing not only resonates with key ideological and scientific ideas of his time but also the way in which his writing prefigures modernist anxieties related to a loss of human spirit in an age of rapid technological advancement and bureaucratic control.<sup>42</sup>

Schreber's *Memoirs* can be said, therefore, to channel a number of themes that are evidenced in a wide range of historically similar expressions, from artistic practice to social and technological change; all of which may be understood together as particular instances of a modernist ideology. As we move on to my later example of mad writing, the *Exegesis* of Philip K. Dick, it is worth bearing these modernist sensibilities in mind to see how turn of the century preoccupations with automation, technology and bureaucratisation give way at the time PKD is writing to postmodern concerns. In Sass, Santner and Kittler we have forms of interpretation that can be positioned as truly psychosocial. Moving beyond the clinical focus of psychoanalysis, each author has analysed Schreber's mad writing and demonstrated how it is in sync with the socio-

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<sup>42</sup> As we close this chapter it is perhaps worth noting that this mechanised view of writing came to find a modernist literary critique with the surrealist practice of *écriture automatique* as demonstrated by Andre Breton in the *Les Champs Magnétiques* (1919) and later *Le Message Automatique* (1933).

historical themes of his day. Before consolidating these forms of interpretation at the end of Part 1, I shall now engage with an overview of another psychosocial body of theory that provides an original, and no less controversial, interpretation of Schreber as well as other forms of mad writing: the 'mad theorising' of Deleuze and Guattari.





## Chapter 4: The 'Schizo-Culture' of Deleuze & Guattari

In my continued overview of the interpretations conducted on Schreber's writing, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of schizoanalysis is the body of psychosocial theory now under examination. Schreber shall be accompanied here by Deleuze and Guattari's readings of Mary Barnes, Vaslav Nijinsky, Antonin Artaud and lastly, Henry Wolfson. Although their body of work remains formidably complex, it is essential that we enter into it, via their references to mad writing, to understand how their collective schizoanalytic project not only offers another methodological means to understanding how 'psychotic' text can reveal profound socio-cultural insights, but also how 'psychotic' text has been utilised to demarcate disciplinary or theoretical differences between psychoanalysis and the wider anti-psychiatry movement. This chapter will conclude my extended literature review on the various sites that have employed mad text to further theoretical development. Before I embark on this journey through Deleuze and Guattari's use of mad writing, I will briefly examine their overall philosophical project in which their readings of mad text are located. As such, I shall use their first collaborative work, *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), as a means to enter into their schizoanalytic enterprise. In order to appreciate the use of mad writing within schizoanalysis, it is necessary that we first have some grounding in the concepts of the desiring-machine, processes of territorialisation and de-territorialisation, as well as the infamous Body-Without-Organs.

### 4.2 *Anti-Oedipus*, Desiring-Machines & the Body-Without-Organs

There are two things that any commentator on *Anti-Oedipus* seems obliged to state from the start: firstly that it is a product of its time - a direct result of the events of May '68; and secondly, that it is no easy read. The book is the outcome of the first encounter between Deleuze, the philosopher and Guattari, the militant political activist and psychoanalyst. It would represent the start of an intellectual collaboration between both figures that would last nearly 20 years. The

tumultuous political climate in which this project was conceived is reflected in the tone and style of their work. Its unconstrained attempts to fashion new forms of living, acting and thinking are played out in the project's highly irregular and obscure presentation. Indeed, many have commented upon the delirious quality of the language within the book, aligning it, for some, to a sort of 'schizophrenic' discourse. *Anti-Oedipus* is the first part of Deleuze and Guattari's 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia' project with its companion piece, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) published eight years later. In many respects *Anti-Oedipus* can be viewed as the conceptual foundation for a radical mode of cultural, political and psychosocial critique they refer to as 'schizoanalysis'. Eugene Holland (1999) argues for schizoanalysis to be understood as a form of materialist psychiatry.<sup>43</sup> By emphasising the materialism of those three 'masters of suspicion' - Marx, Freud and Nietzsche - schizoanalysis attempts to align itself to an emancipatory cause whilst drawing from the revolutionary potential of the 'schizophrenic' subject. 'Schizophrenia' in a sense, serves as the vehicle by which this revolutionary subjectivity can be achieved. In order to construct this form of cultural enquiry and political practice, *Anti-Oedipus* draws from a huge range of disciplines. Its sweeping analysis encompasses art, literature, anthropology, psychology, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, economics, aesthetics, philosophy, biology and mathematics, ensuring that any semblance of traditional intellectual presentation is lost in the process.

Whatever the conceptual origins of schizoanalysis, its stated task is to breakdown, or find an escape from, the way in which desire becomes entangled within a dense network of libidinal flows conditioned by capitalist discourse. It presents itself as a revolutionary form of analysis - 'a militant analysis' - capable of freeing up the subject from formal structures of power or authority, whether

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<sup>43</sup> Although perhaps slightly undeveloped, I understand Deleuze and Guattari's framing of materialist psychiatry as denoting the idea that psychiatry quite literally produces something. A materialist psychiatry is concerned with desire and what this produces as opposed, for instance, with an idealist psychiatry which primarily puts forth ideas or forms of expression; in effect, metaphors, which as Deleuze and Guattari refer to quite clearly at the very start of *Anti-Oedipus*: "Something is produced: effects of a machine, and not of metaphors" (1972, p.2). It is worth noting also that both Deleuze and Guattari identified Wilhelm Reich (1933) and his *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* as the first example of materialist psychiatry with its focus on the way psycho-somatic structures have to first be produced to make fascism possible.

they be invested in the state, the family or our own libidinal impulses. Foucault, in a much-cited introduction to the book, states that *Anti-Oedipus* can be viewed as a template for an ethics for leading a 'non-fascist life'. Foucault's statement here is not to be understood as an ethics opposed to autocratic totalitarian government, but as an ethics opposed to the "fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us" (1972, p.xv). Deleuze and Guattari, in the process of constructing a form of analysis and practice that would liberate us from such forces of desire, take 'psychosis' rather than neurosis as their starting point, and it is this that interests us here.

In their attempts to develop a new mode of critical analysis through the marriage of the Freudian notion of libido and the Marxian concept of labour power, Deleuze and Guattari put forward their 'desiring-machine'. It should be noted, however, that the desiring-machine does not represent a cut and paste amalgamation of Freud and Marx in the style of Wilhelm Reich for example.<sup>44</sup> In fact, Deleuze and Guattari see these twin processes of libido and labour power within the corresponding spheres of the psyche and economy as essentially the same thing: productive forces conditioned on the flow of desire. The centrality of desire within *Anti-Oedipus* is undeniable. Accordingly, they reason that "everything revolves around desire-machines and the production of desire" (1972, p.415). In a similar manner by which Nietzsche proposes a 'will to power' as the basic force conditioning all life, or the manner by which Freud suggests that all living things strive towards a state of death - 'a will to death' - Deleuze and Guattari posit desire as the fundamental principle that underlies life or existence, as they write, "the objective being of desire is the Real in and of itself" (ibid, p.28). Crucially, however, Deleuze and Guattari view desire as a productive force, a continuous uninterrupted flow that does not emanate from lack in the manner that Lacan otherwise presents it. Drawing from Deleuze's earlier work on the philosophy of Spinoza (1970) *Anti-Oedipus*

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<sup>44</sup> In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari are operating within an established tradition of Freudian theory being aligned with Marxist philosophy. The early days of critical theory in the guise of the Frankfurt school consisting of Fromm, Adorno, Marcuse & Benjamin to later attempts by Fredrik Jameson, Slavoj Žižek and the Lacanian left in general (Stavrakakis, Glynos) all attempt to some degree this marriage of depth psychology and a critique of political economy.

utilises a model of desire quite apart from psychoanalysis. Whereas Freud brought into being a concept of desire that revolves around a state of need that can only be fulfilled by a proper object, Spinoza reasoned that desire was the positive essence of every being. So, rather than an ontological lack or deficit being the condition upon which desire manifests itself, Spinoza stresses that desire exists independent of any object and this form of pure striving is the actual essence of a thing.<sup>45</sup> Desire within *Anti-Oedipus* is subsequently viewed as a continuous productive force and sets Deleuze and Guattari's thought at odds with psychoanalysis. Desire, they are keen to stress, is also revolutionary, as it affects or disrupts all established order within any given society. Essentially, this means that no society can be conceived unless this radical force can be repressed. The manner by which this is achieved in contemporary capitalist society is through Oedipus, the ultimate instrument of repression. Whereas Freud believed desire was repressed due to its encounter with reality (the incest taboo, role of the father), Deleuze and Guattari reason to the contrary that desire is the very cause of reality, as they write, "if desire produces, its product is real. If desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality" (1972, p. 28). So whilst they agree with psychoanalysis that Oedipus can be located everywhere, they see it not as innate or ahistorical but rather a particular mode of repression operating within capitalism.

The chief characteristic of desire is that it accords to a machinic logic. The term machine here is employed not just to refer to modes of technology or organisation but specifically to reference machinic connection; machines connected to other machines or rather connections between partial-objects. By stressing that desire is to be understood as a continuous multiplicity, characterised only by degrees of difference, Deleuze and Guattari wish to demonstrate how it operates according to a series of connections, or couplings between certain desiring-machines.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> In truth, this difference between desire, drive and instinct in both thinkers work is somewhat more complex. Drive for Freud perhaps gets closer to Spinoza's conceptualisation which acts as some kind of external force or pressure on the psyche which for Freud emanates from the body.

<sup>46</sup> The desiring-machine and the forces of desiring-production are central to the schizoanalytic project. However, like much else within their oeuvre, pinning them down is no easy task. A well known example from Deleuze and Guattari (1972) may assist. In the child's interactions with objects such as toys, they reason that

Central to these machinic operations are the processes of 'territorialisation' and 'deterritorialisation' which pertain to the way in which desire is firstly able to valorise certain organs and objects before it is then able to free itself up from such connections. These two dynamics operate simultaneously and Deleuze and Guattari employ them to demonstrate how this continual cycle of connection and breakdown, or rather 'coding' and 'decoding', is found not just in the subject's unconscious but is mirrored in the capitalist process itself. Both libido and labour power function according to these fundamental laws. This discussion of machinic connection and the process of 'breaking down' leads us ultimately to the concept of the Body-Without-Organs (BWO).

This 'BWO' plays a central role in Deleuze and Guattari's system, yet, perhaps due to its somewhat paradoxical nature, is particularly difficult to pin down. One way to understand it is as a moment of anti-production, a site where intensities are distributed due to the inherent inertia contained within a social body. It is, in short, a figure of death within the unconscious. Its paradoxical nature derives from it being both an empty body - a desiring-machine that doesn't function - as well as a mode of production brought about through this very inertia. It is this figure of inaction or breakdown that counter-intuitively spurs on the very dynamism of the desiring-machines. Goodchild (1996) attempts to sum this up when he writes, "there are therefore two poles to this whole without moving parts or body-without-organs: an empty body or quality, which does not affect production at all, and full body or drive that falls back upon the desiring-machines" (p.83). The BWO takes its conceptual name from the writings of Artonin Artaud, one of Deleuze and Guattari's 'schizophrenic' writers from whom they draw upon to further illustrate their collaborative schizoanalytic project. We can see from the start, therefore, how mad text plays a fundamentally important role in the construction of Deleuze and Guattari's psychosocial theory. Artaud conceives of the BWO in in the following passage:

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such objects are not purely symbolic, but machinic in that they give desire the means to express itself and therefore form something constructive.

the body is the body/it is all by itself/ and has no need of organs/the body is never an organism/organisms are the enemy of the body (Artaud quoted in Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, p.9-10).

Deleuze and Guattari apply Artaud's strange notion very early on within *Anti-Oedipus* to further their concept of a body, or entity, that functions by 'breaking down' and then reinvesting desire within the machinic system to start all over again in a new form. As one Deleuzian writer explains, The BWO "is the antagonism which makes desire a creative force" (Tynan, 2012, p.141).<sup>47</sup>

#### 4.3 The 'Schizo'

'Schizophrenia' is brought into this conceptual system as they view it as a form of uninterrupted desire that continually scrambles capitalist coding. Guattari writes:

the capitalist economy proceeds by decoding and deterritorialisation: it has its extreme cases, i.e., schizophrenics who decode and deterritorialize themselves to the limit; but also it has its extreme consequences - revolutionaries (2009, p. 52).

However, it also, in a sense, becomes an archetype for a modern form of subjectivity due to this continuous flux which negates any fixed identity or coherent sense of self. As such, *Anti-Oedipus* and schizoanalysis become situated within a postmodern sensibility due to their concern for an essentially fragmented image of the subject. This ongoing connective rhythm between partial-objects, Deleuze and Guattari argue, resembles a 'schizophrenic' process which annihilates a subject's sense of unity. Instances of 'psychotic' functioning are directly related to this dynamic as they state, "schizophrenia is the process of the production of desire and desiring-machines" (1972, p.26). So just as 'schizophrenia' in a strict psychiatric understanding of the term is often positioned as the manner by which an individual's identity is dissolved or shattered, desire, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is characterised by an ongoing continuous dissolution of any fixed identity or organisation due to the syntheses noted above - the forces of production and anti-production.

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<sup>47</sup> In short, this overdetermined concept, which changes considerably between the *Logic of Sense* (1969) and the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972/1980) project, can be viewed as the collection of virtual potentials for any particular body.

In keeping with the earlier concern for intensities, Goodchild (1996) argues that the individual 'schizophrenic' is able to gain proximity to a level of experience that would otherwise be shut off. He writes, "instead of being cut off from society, the schizo is able to experience underlying social relations and forces at the transcendental level" (p. 84). Later he again states that, following the logic of Deleuze and Guattari's unconscious operations:

the schizophrenic is the one who is best able to name the abstract social processes of desire and repression which impinge upon his or her body; indeed, the 'schizo' no longer speaks in the name of some individuated ego constructed within the social field, but speaks in the name of the collective assemblage of enunciation, the specific assemblage of social relations localized and focused upon his or her life (p.85).

The relevance here to my own research is that if we are to adopt Deleuze and Guattari's system of thought, the 'schizophrenic' potentially occupies a privileged position in being able to experience or possibly even name "underlying social relations and forces". A proximity to a transcendental social substance is achieved by the 'schizophrenic' and as such we find a correlation with the modernist analyses above which posits that Schreber was able, via his paranoid delusions, to directly experience a symbolic crisis affecting turn of the century German society or reconfigure modern forms of consciousness via technological development.

What makes Deleuze and Guattari's use of 'schizophrenia' somewhat confusing is that it seems to denote at least two different modes of experience. On the one hand, they speak of the 'schizo' in an individuated sense; the subject that deterritorialises itself to the limit. However, at the same time, it is important to note that 'schizophrenia' is also utilised by Deleuze and Guattari to refer to a "specific mode of psychic and social functioning that is characteristically both produced and repressed by the capitalist economy" (Holland, 1999, p.x). 'Schizophrenia' in this instance is not referencing any 'disease' or 'mental illness' but rather that which is unleashed by capitalism; a broad sweeping socio-historical dynamic conditioned on capitalism's productive forces. Holland argues for 'schizophrenia' to be understood in this respect as a 'radically indeterminate form of semiosis' (1985, p.293) which is brought about due to all fixed meaning and belief having been dismantled by



capitalism's deterritorialising and reterritorialising processes. 'Schizophrenia', in this instance, becomes a trope for understanding contemporary western society in general. We should be quite certain, however, that this is not meant in any metaphorical sense. Deleuze and Guattari see 'schizophrenic' functioning as the very essence of social relatedness under a capitalist mode of production that dissolves formal structures of identity, power and authority. However, this dynamic necessitates a counter reaction: a reverse tendency to combat the dissolution of all fixed meaning and belief. In its place, capitalism engenders a fixed absolutist structuring belief system characterised as rigid and inflexible. Deleuze and Guattari term it paranoia. These two polarities, 'schizophrenia and paranoia', therefore, become the fundamental organising principles within contemporary capitalist society. This cross over between pathology (schizophrenia) and ideology (capitalism) is summed up by the Deleuzian inspired philosopher, Brian Massumi (1996) when he collapses diagnostic categories and political states into one another. He writes:

the distinction between the two virtual poles, or drives, can be conceived as a battle between a limitative body without organs or plane of consistency and a nonlimitative one. Both are selective, but in different modes. Fascism-paranoia is segregative (tends towards exclusive disjunctive synthesis and the creation of rigidly bounded compartmentalization's: ghettos); anarchy-schizophrenia is expansive (tends towards inclusive conjunctive synthesis and the mixing of bodies and desires: misrecognition) (p.118).

We now have the conceptual basis with which to appreciate the use of 'psychotic' text within schizoanalysis' attempts to demarcate itself from other disciplinary fields whilst also formulating a radical form of psychosocial analysis. We can appreciate already how the vastly complex and abstract theorising of Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis may on the one hand come into conflict with Mad Studies due to its undoubted high intellectualism, but also at the same time offer an example of knowledge being produced alongside madness. There is a mad quality to this talk of desiring-machines, bodies-without-organs and the way in which it is presented within *Anti-Oedipus*. We should also recall Richard Ingram's (the initiator of the Mad Studies project) comments earlier,

which posited an ally to Mad Studies in Deleuze and Guattari due to their maddening prose and disregard for conventional academic practice.

#### **4.4 Schizoanalysis/Psychoanalysis/Anti-Psychiatry**

By focusing on two areas of mad writing within Deleuze and Guattari's output I will demonstrate how schizoanalysis not only differs from its psychoanalytic origins but also from much of the anti-psychiatry movement with which Guattari, in particular, became so associated. The first example of mad text concerns, once again, the *Memoirs* of Daniel Paul Schreber. Schreber has accompanied much of our discussion thus far from Freud's (1911) initial interpretation to Lacan's (1955-6) emphasis on language and the foreclosure of paternal law. What ties these commentaries together is an essential familial matrix into which Schreber is placed in order to explain his delirium. For Deleuze and Guattari, however, Schreber serves as a prime example of the inadequacies of psychoanalysis and the manoeuvre whereby all psychic and social investments are reduced to the much cited 'mommy-daddy-me' triangle. Their own schizoanalytic interpretation, therefore, attempts to rescue Schreber from being "posthumously oedipalised" (1972, p.64), as they ask, "How does one dare reduce to the paternal theme a delirium so rich, so differentiated, so 'divine' as the Judge's?" (p.64). Deleuze and Guattari are effectively utilising the 'psychotic' text of Schreber in this instance to clearly spell out the inadequacies of psychoanalysis whilst bolstering the arguments for their method of politically analysing desire. By Freud and Lacan reinforcing, or indeed whitewashing, Schreber's delirium with oedipal themes, something very valuable is lost for Deleuze and Guattari. Their comments on this are unequivocal. They write firstly that "the psychoanalyst says that we must *necessarily* discover Schreber's daddy beneath his superior God, and doubtless also his elder brother beneath his inferior God" (1972, p.15). However the real crux of the matter for Deleuze and Guattari is that:

the memoirs of this Schreber, and it hardly matters whether we call him a paranoid or a schizophrenic, contain a kind of racial, racist, historical raving. Schreber raves about

continents, cultures, races. It's a surprising delirium, with a political, historical, cultural content" (2009, p.9). And beyond Schreber they attest that "all delirium possesses a world-historical, political, and racial content, mixing and sweeping along races, cultures, continents and kingdoms (ibid, p.97).

Deleuze and Guattari's assertion in *Anti-Oedipus* and beyond, concerning the 'schizophrenic's ability to gain access to a transcendental level of experience, is touched upon here in their comments about Schreber's historical ravings. Schreber is not just commenting, so they believe, on the breakdown in his immediate familial or oedipal relations but is in fact able to comment astutely upon political, historical and cultural matters. His ability to do so is conditioned by the 'intensity' he feels once he is able to break out of the oedipal matrix. If, in contrast to the reductive oedipalised approaches to the *Memoirs* we are able, following Deleuze and Guattari, to frame Schreber's writing as an expressive example of political and social investments contained within the content of his text, then we perhaps get closer to Santner (1996) and Kittler's (1985) utilisation of Schreber to emphasise specific socio-political themes. The entire issue for Deleuze and Guattari is that psychoanalysis, and the traditional commentaries that have been made within that discipline, essentially reinscribe a psychoanalytic shibboleth onto the text itself. Our earlier methodological discussion about the merits of 'paranoid reading' and the risk of interpretation itself reproducing systems of knowledge that it 'finds' within its object are never more pertinent. Why reduce this multifaceted and complex delusional creation, Deleuze and Guattari ask, to the pathological role of the father? A father who Deleuze and Guattari are keen to stress is not even mentioned by Schreber, as they write:

It should be noted that Judge Schreber's destiny was not merely that of being sodomized, while still alive, by the rays from heaven, but also that of being posthumously oedipalised by Freud. From the enormous political, social, and historical content of Schreber's delirium, *not one word is retained* (1972, p.64).

A schizoanalytic approach to the *Memoirs*, therefore, seeks to free up Schreber from a strictly familial interpretation and instead demonstrates how the 'schizo' is plugged into numerous other levels of social existence. By breaking down the barrier between self and other, interior and exterior,

Schreber produces a heightened untrammelled experiential text, a text that is directly invested with cultural, historical and socio-political themes. Again, they write:

Judge Schreber feels something, produces something, and is capable of explaining the process theoretically. Something is produced: the effect of a machine, not mere metaphors (1972, p.2).

The mention of 'mere metaphors', we could safely speculate here, refers to the paternal metaphor which we encountered in Chapter 2, in the context of Lacan's (1955-56) commentary about the *Memoirs*. This thinly disguised attack on Lacan's theoretical system, drawn from mad text, represents Deleuze and Guattari's sustained attempts to not only provide fresh analysis on Schreber but to highlight the deficiencies within the psychoanalytic project whilst doing so. For them, the 'schizo' is productive, something is produced that is real in terms of effects or intensities. What is produced is not just an aspect of language that refers back to language itself, as Lacan would perhaps maintain.

Deleuze and Guattari continue to draw upon the *Memoirs* to flesh out their collection of interrelated concepts that effectively form the backbone of *Anti-Oedipus* and the practice of schizoanalysis. Schreber, as well as the 'schizophrenic' writings of Antonin Artaud, are able to further illustrate the inherent flaws within a strictly psychoanalytic mode of interpretation, for instance, when referring back to the concept of the desiring-machine. They write:

Desiring-machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down. Judge Schreber "lived for a long time without a stomach, without intestines, almost without lungs, with a torn oesophagus, without a bladder, and with shattered ribs; he used sometimes to swallow part of his larynx with his food etc." (Freud, 1911 quoted in Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, p.9).

Freud's very own words are highlighted within *Anti-Oedipus* to help expand their notion of anti-production or indeed, the effect that the BWO has within the chain of desiring machines. Schreber's relation to his own body is recalled to show how the capacity for continuous libidinal existence is sustained by the collapse or corruption of his very anatomy. For Deleuze and Guattari all other libidinal systems, likewise, function according to this collapse and continual reconstruction of their

component parts. Capital, as a social system they similarly highlight, functions accordingly to this counter-intuitive logic.

I mentioned earlier how the concept of the BWO is itself drawn from the 'mad writing' of Antonin Artaud. Artaud appears throughout *Anti-Oedipus* and his 'schizophrenic' poetry is called on as it contains revealing similarities to Schreber's delirious writing. Initially, Artaud is highlighted to demonstrate once again the failings of a familial approach to analysing desire. In words such as the following:

*I don't believe in father*

*In mother,*

*Got no*

*Papamummy* (Artaud, 1965 quoted in Deleuze & Guattari, 1972, p.16).

Deleuze and Guattari find the 'schizo's' writing tapping into the essentially non-familial character of the subject's existence. Likewise, from the same work, Artaud writes, "I, Antonin Artaud, am my son, my father, my mother, and myself" (ibid). Deleuze and Guattari are keen to stress that the subject, freed from a strictly oedipalised framing, is able to illuminate our understanding of identity formation and what they refer to as a 'transpositional subject' - a subject free from the constraints of a set of Hegelian inspired syntheses that serve to restrict the nature of oedipalised identity. This subject is the 'schizo' *par excellence*, as they go on to write:

Schreber is man and woman, parent and child, dead and alive: which is to say, he is situated wherever there is a singularity, in all the series and in all the branches that transforms him into a woman, and at its terminal point he is already the mother of a new humanity and can finally die (1972, p.85).

The transpositional subject is something that both Artaud and Schreber are able to illustrate through their respective writings. Once the constraints of Oedipus have been cast off, a revolutionary force is unleashed for Deleuze and Guattari that does away with traditional notions of any static subjectivity or identity which is limited to particular roles or characteristics allotted to it. The 'schizo' represents the very dynamic by which identity, image, or static forms of subjectivity are done away

with. In so doing, the 'schizo', they allege, is able to tap into wider spheres of cultural, political or historical life. The singularity of the 'schizo's' experience reveals the social-cultural significance to his/her literary production. It references his or her escape or 'line of flight' away from an oedipalised, and, therefore, politically repressed existence. Following on from this, Deleuze and Guattari further draw from an example of 'psychotic' writing, in particular that produced by celebrated Russian ballet dancer Vaslav Nijinsky in 1919, who was also able to evidence this notion of the 'schizo' as 'singularity'. Nijinsky tragically succumbed to a 'psychotic' breakdown towards the end of his life and whilst interned in the Burghölzli asylum, he was able to maintain a diary detailing his turmoil in his attempts to reconcile his emotional and mental life in the wake of various paranoid and delusional experiences. In a similar vein to Schreber and Artaud he writes:

I am God I was not God I am a Clown; I am Apis. I am Egyptian. I am Red Indian. I am a Negro. I am a Chinaman. I am Japanese. I am a foreigner, a stranger. I am a sea bird. I am a land bird. I am the tree of Tolstoy. I am the roots of Tolstoy .... I am husband and wife in one. I love my wife. I love my husband (Nijinsky, 1936, p.2 quoted in Deleuze & Guattari, 1972, p.86).

The 'schizo', as evidenced via the writing of Schreber, Artaud and Nijinsky, becomes the paradigmatic example of a transsubjective and revolutionary form of subjectivity at the heart of all forms of identity. It is fundamental to their abstract theoretical system as a whole.

If Schreber's example of mad writing, alongside the works of Artaud and Nijinsky, enabled Deleuze and Guattari to critique psychoanalysis, what of the anti-psychiatry movement with which Guattari became so associated? Some years after the publication of *Anti-Oedipus* and their collaborative works, Guattari (2009), in an attempt to distance himself from the English-speaking variant of the anti-psychiatry movement (specifically that centred on the figure of R.D. Laing and Kingsley Hall) takes another example of mad text as his object of enquiry. Mary Barnes, who was a resident at Kingsley Hall, wrote her own 'schizophrenic autobiography' in 1974 which was appended by her treating doctor Joseph Berke, a psychiatrist hugely influenced by the thought of R.D. Laing. Kingsley Hall itself became famous as a radical therapeutic community, established to offer a viable

alternative to the British psychiatric system. Community roles were distributed evenly and regardless of one's sanity, professional background or social status, all positions were based on a notion of equality. Accordingly, no orders were given and no prescriptions made. Kingsley Hall attempted to liberate the mad from the confines of the psychiatric system to which it was so opposed. Although its name will be most closely associated with Laing, many of the prominent British anti-psychiatric figures, such as Maxwell Jones and David Cooper, became associated with it. Guattari acknowledged the threats to Kingsley Hall's existence owing to its experimental status with many external powers wishing its demise. However, the biggest threat for Guattari came from within. Despite the residents of Kingsley Hall having freed themselves from the recognizable constraints of traditional psychiatric institutions, Guattari states that "the internalization of repression continues" as they are "left under the yoke of simplistic reductions to the hackneyed triangle of father, mother and child" (2009, p.130). The critique of Oedipus that has followed much of our discussion is fundamental to his views on Kingsley Hall and in order to emphasize this he submits Mary Barnes autobiography to close scrutiny.

Mary Barnes achieved cult like status and quickly became a cause célèbre for the anti-psychiatry movement following the publication of her account. Her book details a decline into madness and how, through the compassion and warmth shown to her by her psychiatrist, she is able to regress back into childhood. This regression, she writes, enabled her to tackle early traumatic experiences before she was then able to 'grow' again. Mary Barnes' 'schizophrenic' experience gets re-modelled into a trip, a mad journey into herself and her own problematic past. Guattari, in his indictment of it, writes, "it is at the same time both a model enterprise of the liberation of "mad desire" and a neobehaviorist dogmatism" containing both "brilliant discoveries and an impenitent familialism akin to the most traditional Puritanism" (ibid. p.130). Mary Barnes' example of 'psychotic' text speaks, for Guattari, not just to the oedipalised nature of the wider anti-psychiatry movement (as well as the new fashion for structural analysis) but to a fundamental problem going all

the way back to Freud's (1901) studies on hysteria; essentially that all of these theoretical currents can be reduced to three basic primers: interpretation, familialism and transference. In a sense, Guattari demonstrates how Mary Barnes' madness, or rather the interpretation given to it, reflects the oedipalised nature of Kingsley Hall. He writes, "she thus carved for herself a small Oedipal territory that will resound with all the paranoiac tendencies of the institution" (2009, p.131). Perhaps no surprise then that Mary Barnes discovered an essentially familial basis to her 'psychosis' (via a transferential relation with her psychiatrist) if Kingsley Hall actively sought to re-inscribe such elements into its therapeutic work. Again, by reinforcing or strengthening these modalities of interpretation, a whole 'schizophrenic' experience with all its complexity becomes yet more grist for the psychoanalytic mill.<sup>48</sup>

Although this revolutionary zeal to schizoanalysis may seem slightly dated to modern sympathies with its emphasis on escaping familial networks to instate radical forms of subjectivity, for our purposes it is vital to note that Deleuze and Guattari's project had taken 'psychotic' writing in the form of Schreber, Barnes and others and used them not only to theorise what 'schizophrenia' is and does, but also to demarcate differences between theoretical system, specifically psychoanalysis as well as the wider anti-psychiatry movement. That said, the central concern of schizoanalysis' is to show how psychoanalysis is complicit in capitalist forms of subjectification. It is not a wholesale critique and many psychoanalytic concepts, as we have seen, are retained within the *Anti-Oedipus*

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<sup>48</sup> Kingsley Hall, which became such a focal point for English anti-psychiatry, finds its counterpart in La Borde, the psychiatric clinic which Guattari remained a member of until his death in 1992. The contrast between these two institutions may go some way in delineating the differences between Guattari and the anti-psychiatry movement in general. The institute's director, Jean Oury was himself much more sympathetic to the radical approaches of say R. D. Laing or Franco Basaglia and the 'Psichiatria Democratica'. However, their emphasis on dissolving the institution and refusing to medicate did not find favour with Guattari. He held that such a position essentially meant 'refusing the mad the right to be mad'. As he explains when contrasting Kingsley Hall to La Borde "what was at stake was not a dismissal of the institution altogether, but rather a transformation of it from the inside" (2009, p.21). Later he comments that at La Borde "everything there is set up so that 'psychotic' patients live in a climate of activity and assume responsibility, not only with the goal of developing an ambience of communication, but also in order to create local centres for collective subjectivation" (2009, p.6). The goal of creating conditions that promote forms of communication and instances of collective subjectivation gets close here to our earlier discussion on achieving stability in 'psychosis' via a social link. In effect, Guattari is stating that La Borde attempted to create conditions which would be ripe for instating a social bond of sorts.



project, such as the unconscious, desire, libido and repression. The attacks against notions such as the death instinct and Oedipus are undertaken to demonstrate how they are not themselves universal tendencies but rather specific attributes of a capitalist system. Freud's major downfall then, as we have noted extensively, according to schizoanalysis, was to re-inscribe desire upon what they term the 'daddy-mommy-me matrix' (Oedipus) or the 'holy family'. "The main thrust of Deleuze and Guattari's genealogical critique of Oedipus, then, is to break out of the stifling confines of the nuclear family and restore the analysis of desire to its full socio-historical context" (Holland, 1999 p.91). Or, as they themselves state, "to discover beneath the familial reduction the nature of the social investments of the unconscious" (1972, p.294). The issue seems clear. Psychoanalysis is inherently problematic as it reproduces a capitalist set of relations within its own explication of what conditions the nature of the subject's psyche. By presenting this triangular relation through which each subject is socialised as in some sense transcultural or ahistorical, it is unable to offer an account of how capitalist modes of production necessarily result in the familial organisation of desire. As such, psychoanalysis is unsuitable to the task of analysing the subject as it does not place the subject within a historical or political context of which psychoanalysis itself is also a part. Before moving on to the last example of 'psychotic' writing that Deleuze employs to further his own particular literary project, it is worth noting how schizoanalysis has been utilised by Deleuze and Guattari amongst others. Schizoanalysis, as we shall see, effectively conjoins the production of literary and schizophrenic production into one process. The mechanisms underlying both share fundamental attributes, the value of which cannot be ignored for this project which takes the convergence of 'psychosis' and writing as its area of study.

Schreber and Mary Barnes' mad texts have, as noted, been utilised in both the critique of psychoanalytic reductionism and the British anti-psychiatry movement that similarly relies on familial interpretation. The significance of 'psychotic' texts or literary writing to schizoanalysis is by no means confined to these two examples; Nijinsky and Artaud having been also touched upon. By

focusing on these instances of 'psychotic' writing, Deleuze and Guattari manage, in a sense, to merge 'schizophrenia' and literary production into one abstract process, the purpose of which is again to stress the radical potential both contain. As such they state, "reading a text is never a scholarly exercise in search of what is signified, still less a highly textual exercise in search of a signifier, [but rather] a productive use of the literary machine, montage of desiring machines, a schizoid exercise that extracts from the text its revolutionary force (1972, p.116). Later, when commenting on Engels' analysis of Balzac, they claim "literature is like schizophrenia: a process and not a goal, a production and not an expression" (1972, p.145).<sup>49</sup>

#### 4.5 Wolfson, the Procedure & Deleuze's Literary Clinic

The last example of 'psychotic' text that we must cover here in our survey of Deleuze and Guattari's contribution to knowledge produced from instances of mad writing, concerns Deleuze's use of Louis Wolfson's (1970) *Le Schizo et Les Langues* (Schizophrenia and Languages). Louis Wolfson was an American author who wrote in French and experienced 'schizophrenia' from an early age. The particular fascination for Deleuze was that Wolfson, following the onset of his 'psychosis', quickly came to form a strong aversion to his native mother tongue. As such, he devised a

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<sup>49</sup> This merger of schizophrenia and literature is a prominent aspect of the larger schizoanalysis project. Although I have focused on Schreber and Barnes above, Deleuze and Guattari expend considerable energy during their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project examining a range of literary names that have often been read via their mental or psychological character. Deleuze and Guattari (1975) read Franz Kafka's work and develop the concept of a 'minor literature' which represents for them a real attempt to break free from an oedipal logic. Kafka, they argue offers us a 'line of escape' and as such is emblematic of deterritorialising processes. These lines of escape find expression in the recurring animalistic motifs within Kafka's work (insect, mouse, dog, ape), all of which represent a flight from the immediate oedipal drama, a process of actual deterritorialisation in the operation of 'becoming-animal'. Kafka finds a close ally for Guattari in the figure of Marcel Proust. Both are viewed as specialists in presenting "hyper-deterritorialised mental objects" (1979, p.231) and are of interest to schizoanalysis due to their ability to commit to writing "mutations of perceptive components, in the phenomena of the magnification, displacement, overlapping, acceleration, or deceleration, etc. ... of sensorial coordinates" (p.232). Following on from these literary reference points for schizoanalysis, prominent Deleuzian scholar, Eugene Holland (1993) builds on Deleuze and Guattari's analysis by applying the practice of schizoanalysis to the works of Charles Baudelaire. In a similar fashion to concerns already raised, he demonstrates how schizoanalysis is capable of unearthing socioeconomic and cultural considerations that may be contained within literary texts.

complicated communicational system whereby he immediately began translating every English phrase he came across into a foreign language but one that still retained a similar sound or sense to its English original. What resulted was a highly complex linguistic system that incorporated aspects of numerous other languages (notably French, German, Hebrew and Russian) which enabled him to avoid any relation to the English-speaking world whilst allowing him to live in his own private symbolic existence. The principles of this highly idiosyncratic linguistic system were committed to script in 1963 and eventually published in 1970 with an introduction by Deleuze himself. It has remained solely available in French due to the monumental challenges translation represent for such a bizarre and complicated work. Deleuze (1998) followed his initial introduction with an essay entitled “Louis Wolfson; or, The Procedure” in his last ever published work; a collection of essays covering literature’s relationship to what he termed ‘the clinic’. Although this *Critique et Clinique* project was the sole example of Deleuze’s singular engagement with literature, as we have seen over the course of this chapter, literature was called upon consistently throughout his overall theoretical enterprise. In his *Critique et Clinique* project, literature in the form of Lewis Carroll, Samuel Beckett, Herman Melville and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch demonstrates, for Deleuze, how literary art implies a way of living or a ‘form of life’. Literature as a symptom is able, according to Deleuze, to highlight the vitality that exists within artistic creation whilst offering new possibilities or modes of living.

With regard to Wolfson, Deleuze utilises his highly unorthodox book and example of ‘psychotic’ text to boldly state that, “psychosis is inseparable from a variable linguistic procedure. The procedure is the very process of the psychosis” (1998, p.9). By this, Deleuze intends to mean that ‘psychosis’ and language are intimately linked but not in the way that Lacan has theorised. Deleuze wishes to demonstrate how language as well as bodily depth are key to understanding ‘psychosis’ and by implication the linguistic procedure. In perhaps a similar fashion to the way in which Kittler relates language acquisition to the maternal body, so too does Deleuze in his overall

philosophical project return to the relation between language and bodily depth or surface.<sup>50</sup> Language and symbol formation occur, for Deleuze, through and in the body. Our voice emitting sound, for instance, is an example of the body both producing instances of language or signifiers whilst also differentiating itself from them. Sounds escape from the voice of the body that originate as units of language within its depths. Language finds its origin within the embodied depth of the subject yet due to it reaching the surface it undergoes a resultant change as it interacts within the constant flux of the social. It is the depths of the body, however, that provide the basis for the subject's ability to articulate itself. Tynan (2012) and his analysis of Deleuze's paper on Wolfson may assist our understanding of language and a concern for bodily surfaces and depths when he writes:

Language as a formal totality does not exist apart from the efforts by which the pathic body differentiates itself gradually. Sounds are distinguished from the body that omits them [....] The body reaches the limit of a certain physical process, for example eating, and this causes the process to change. Thus language and symbol formation are understood through a material genesis of the body which always begins in the domain of depths (p.82).

What is important to Deleuze's analysis of Wolfson's mad text is that Deleuze finds within his account an example of how the 'schizophrenic' is robbed of this 'bodily depth'. As Tynan writes again, "the maternal language loses its 'good sense', that is, it is stripped down to its bare phonetic forms which thus become detached from any designated sematic content or 'state of affairs'" (2012, p.83). What Wolfson attempts to do, his linguistic procedure and highly bizarre technique discussed, is employ foreign words that exist outside of his native mother tongue in order to compensate for this lack of bodily support within the realm of the semiotic. Deleuze reasons by the end of his analysis, however, that Wolfson fails in this procedure and it is precisely this failure which, likewise, ensures Wolfson, in Deleuze's opinion, does not attain the status as literature, that account for his 'psychotic' status. As Deleuze (1998) writes, Wolfson's procedure 'remains unproductive'. The

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<sup>50</sup> Deleuze (1969) reasons in *Logic of Sense* that this loss of bodily depth leads to a form of violence on the body. "The moment that the pinned-down word loses its sense, it bursts into pieces; it is decomposed into syllables, letters, and above all into consonants which act directly on the body, penetrating and bruising it" (p.100). This is precisely what Wolfson encounters.

concern for bodies and 'psychosis' is something that shall accompany us now as we enter into my main object of study, the *Exegesis* of Philip, K. Dick.

Over the last three chapters I have surveyed a wide range of interrelated concepts, ideas and philosophical speculations that link madness, writing and theory together in a complex fashion. Although there remain key differences and contradictions in the way in which these different systems of thought have interpreted 'psychotic' text, they have demonstrated, each in their own way, how mad writing has provided the material for reflections on the nature of 'psychosis' itself, as well as the wider terrain in which 'psychotic' subjects have committed their experiences to script. In short, all of the interpretations covered have lead me to the foregrounding of a psychosocial analyses of 'psychotic' text that pays particular attention to the psychoanalytically informed notion that 'psychotic' writing (and indeed 'psychosis' itself) is a form of cure or self-stabilisation.<sup>51</sup> What's more, the theoretical insight afforded us by the psychoanalytic thinkers covered allows us to appreciate, to some extent, how this writing cure or stabilisation process achieved through delusion or paranoia can allow 'the social' to creep back into even the most outlandish and bizarre claims emanating from mad experience. Although Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis takes point with the psychoanalytic foundation on which this notion rests, they similarly suggest that the 'schizophrenic' is able to tie himself into various plains of social existence and this 'machinic connection', to use their language, can also be enacted via the process of writing.

We have then at the end of Part 1, a tight nexus emerging between writing, madness and the way in which this can harness or reproduce social, political and ideological themes within the

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<sup>51</sup> Foregrounding a psychosocial approach necessitates some discussion on precisely what I mean by 'the psychosocial'. In essence, I view it as an attempt to think how the domains of the individual or the personal are intimately related to the social. Although a relatively new field of distinct research ('psychosocial studies') it amalgamates a number of established theoretical positions ranging from critical psychology and discourse analysis, through to social theory, gender studies, queer theory and feminist research as well as aspects of poststructuralism, wider critical theory and of various strands of philosophy. All of these differing disciplines and bodies of theory are drawn upon in an attempt to bridge, what psychosocial studies sees, as a gap or fissure between an academic focus which is strictly limited to the individual versus society or the personal against the political. The internal and external comprise the same space for any psychosocial enquiry.

content of a startlingly extraordinary account of one man's subjectivity or place in the world. Reading Schreber's transformation into a woman or the intricate nature of the cosmos that he puts forth, in tandem with modern developments within culture and technology, is a vitally important manoeuvre that I will hold onto as we enter into an original set of analyses of a different mad text. Kittler's (1985) attention to developments in media and resultant forms of communication, as well as Santner's (1996) focus on a breakdown in symbolic functioning that straddles both the subject and the social simultaneously, are incredibly rich avenues for thinking through the way in which mad writing can be analysed.

Our initial methodological discussion relating to Mad Studies has to perhaps now be augmented slightly by these forms of analysis. In some respects there is a slight conflict here with a hard-line approach that states any attempt to render meaning from madness via academic interpretation, without seeking dialogue with an author, is necessarily unethical and serves to reinscribe an othering of madness via abstract theorising. All of the interpretations of Schreber covered here in Part 1 have, to a greater or lesser extent, done just this. But does this mean that these readings are any less valuable in my own attempts to explore the mad writing of PKD? If I want to harness the insights on offer here but also acknowledge the ethical pitfalls that Voronka, Russo and Beresford outline, then I effectively will have to move beyond the debates within Mad Studies that are centred almost solely on whether reading enacts a form of violence or not. The readings that I shall develop going forward do seek to render meaning from madness and are informed by the psychosocial analyses covered above. It is this commitment to psychosociality, a methodological focus on depth versus surface, as well as an acknowledgment of the overdetermined nature of interpretation that will allow me, I believe, to move past the somewhat restrictive conclusions to the Mad Studies debates. In keeping with the way in which psychoanalysis has provided the theoretical foundation from which these more psychosocially minded readings have followed, I want to establish a psychoanalytic reading of PKD's mad writing first, prior to opening it up to broader socio-

cultural analysis. Before constructing these readings and in order to contextualise them, I shall open Part 2 now by introducing PKD, his relation to forms of psychiatrisation and his exegetic writing; a collection of writing that I shall utilise as a foundation to make my own contribution to these debates relating to method, the place of interpretation and the paradoxical figure of madness itself.

## **Part 2: Psychosocial Readings of Philip K. Dick's *Exegesis***

*"The paranoids merely have "delusional ideas"; they see the same reality that we do, but interpret it differently, work it into their system" - Philip, K. Dick (1964, p.171).*



## Chapter 5: The Madness of Philip K. Dick: PKD, 'Psychosis' & *The Exegesis*

Philip Kindred Dick has, since his death in 1982, become something of a popular cultural icon. His vast back catalogue of science fiction and mainstream novels, as well as a 100 plus short stories, have secured him the position as a celebrated writer and literary figure. In 2007, a number of his works came to be included in the prestigious Library of America, further securing his place as a canonical author. However, this mostly posthumous fame is arguably found in the ever-increasing number of Hollywood films and TV adaptations that have been made of his work rather than his actual literary output. Many such adaptations bear the hallmarks of his personal and quite unique vision of reality. As a result, his name has become synonymous as much with uncertain ontological realities and highly speculative philosophical predicaments as it has with the staples of a pulp science fiction genre consisting of time travel, alien invasion, telepathy and so forth. Another prominent and recurring motif, and one that has special relevance to this thesis, pertains to 'psychosis' and psychopathology more generally. Novels such as *Time out of Joint* (1959), *Martian Time Slip* (1964), *Clans of the Alphane Moon* (1964) and *We Can Build You* (1972) illustrate this most effectively. Many of his other narratives are also infused with a paranoid sensibility,<sup>52</sup> one that is also reflected in the biographical details of his colourful and well documented life. In this chapter I wish to introduce the figure of PKD, his work and ultimately his mammoth writing project that he undertook from 1974 until his death eight years later. PKD referred to this as his *Exegesis* and despite running at many thousands of pages, it was finally made available to the public following a large edited version published in 2011.<sup>53</sup> The relation to psychopathology, 'psychosis' or madness that pervades PKD's life and work can be understood to culminate in this lengthy, unwieldy

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<sup>52</sup> For a brief but worthwhile commentary on some of these paranoid themes found in PKD's work and the associated adaptations, see Daniel Wyman's "The Paranoid Individual: An Analysis of Paranoia in the Writing of Philip K. Dick" in *Occam's Razor*: Vol.2, Article 3.

<sup>53</sup> The full *Exegesis* is available on line via <http://zebrapedia.psu.edu/> with attendant commentary and discussion from the PKD fan community. (Accessed 10/04/2020).

document. It is this document that I shall be conducting psychosocial readings of, comprising Part 2 of this thesis.

Before doing so it is necessary that we contextualise PKD, his work and the *Exegesis*. Although this is not an exhaustive literature review concerned with all the areas in which PKD has impacted on literary studies, science fiction studies or cultural theory more generally, this chapter does serve to introduce some of the more prominent debates or areas of academic life in which PKD is often situated. To begin, I want to touch on a set of debates or ideas that circle around the concept of postmodernism and its relation to 'psychosis' or 'schizophrenia' in particular. In order to perhaps best understand the reception of PKD's work and the manner by which it is consistently placed in relation to varying forms of madness, it is necessary that we reference the use of clinical terms such as paranoia and 'schizophrenia' by postmodern theorists who attempt to describe cultural states of being; states that are often represented in PKD's science fiction imaginings. Following which, I want to turn to PKD's own biography. As stated previously, this is not to claim that PKD was 'psychotic' but rather to highlight his undoubted preoccupation with aspects of mental health and his own experience of psychological or emotional turmoil. As I noted in the introduction, attempts to position PKD as a 'certified psychotic subject' or someone suffering from a 'schizophrenic illness' are hotly debated to say the least. I will refer to some of these debates emerging from his biography whilst highlighting some of the inherent pitfalls in attempting to pathologize an individual via their biography or writing more generally. This is to make no mention of the ethical implications of doing so.<sup>54</sup> Lastly, this chapter will touch on the scholarly work that already exists in respect of my object of study, the *Exegesis*. What should become apparent by the

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<sup>54</sup> As the authors (Schmidt et al, 2020) of the short *Lancet* article *Retrospective Diagnosis of Mental Illness: Past and Present* state, "mental illnesses should be seen as social constructions. For example, what was considered as a past psychiatric disorder {...} is nowadays considered a norm variant, and some disorders have no equivalent past disorder. In other words, medical knowledge is socially and culturally transformed. Thus, projection of disease categories and definitions into the past is an inadmissible simplification and an anachronism" (p.14). Further discussion and full article can be found at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(19\)30287-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(19)30287-1/fulltext) (accessed 10/04/2020).

end of the chapter is that categorising this author, his life or final writing project is anything but an easy task and this is perhaps especially relevant when it comes to discussing the 'madness' that constantly surrounds this enigmatic writer and popular figure.

## **5.2 PKD, Postmodernism & (Paranoid) 'Schizophrenia'**

Any casual glance at the critical commentary surrounding PKD's life and work will likely result in the emergence of one key term: postmodernism. In fact, two of the chief architects of the concept, Fredric Jameson (1991) in his *Postmodernism: or the Cultural logic of Late Capitalism* and Jean Baudrillard (1981) with *Simulacra and Simulation* both cite PKD in these respective works. Similarly, one of the most popular monographs on PKD in recent years also places his work within the conflictual space of 'postmodern humanism' (Palmer, 2003). For Jameson, PKD's work, particularly that set within the 1950's, is indicative of postmodernism's tendency to evoke a 'nostalgia for the present'. Jameson's (2005) utilisation of PKD's novels to provoke a questioning of historicity is further complemented by his later thoughts on the way in which PKD offers a method for conceptualising new 'historico-temporal perspectives', ones often obfuscated by postmodernism itself. Baudrillard, on the other hand, draws on PKD's work to flesh out his ideas concerning 'hyperreality' and the fabrication of our shared collective world.

If we remain with both of these theorists, we can note also how their thoughts on late capitalist society depict postmodernity as bearing a certain resemblance to 'schizophrenia', a phenomenon of great interest to PKD as well. In fact, Jameson explicitly cites Lacan's theorisation of 'schizophrenia' when he describes it as a "breakdown in the signifying chain [...] the interlocking syntagmatic series of signifiers which constitutes an utterance or meaning" (1991, p.26). For Jameson, this breakdown becomes indicative of postmodernism's capacity to illicit within us an inability "to unify the past, present, and future of our own biographical experience and psychic life" (ibid, p.27); an inability conditioned by a collapse of all temporal frames. Indeed, in a precursor to his

1991 book, in an essay entitled *Postmodernism and the Consumer Society* (1982), he again draws on Lacan to make a comparison between the 'schizophrenic's' undifferentiated vision of the present (with a corresponding loss of self) and the experience of postmodern time. This notion of postmodern time bearing close resemblance to 'psychosis' or 'schizophrenia', particularly one derived from within Lacanian framework, is something that we shall return to in later chapters. Baudrillard similarly touches on this estrangement or altered relation to reality when, in *The Ecstasy of Communication* (1987), he emphasises how modern subjects are not now afflicted by pathologies we may term hysteria or paranoia but rather "a state of terror which is characteristic of schizophrenia, an over-proximity of all things" (p.27). The 'schizophrenic' state comes to characterise a postmodern experience for Baudrillard that is typified by an unbearable sense of intensity and associated confusion.

We could say, then, that both Jameson and Baudrillard's work, perhaps more so than any others within the postmodern cannon, has helped establish a conceptual link between 'schizophrenia' and postmodernism. Although Deleuze and Guattari within their theoretical system argued for a relation between capitalism and 'schizophrenia', they were essentially attempting to highlight the transcendental potential of 'schizophrenia' in overcoming capitalist process. For Jameson, no such potential exists and his loose Lacanian theorisation of this clinical entity is used in a largely metaphorical sense. Although he and Baudrillard may have contributed towards the popular cultural notion of 'postmodern schizophrenia' in which PKD's writing may have come to be understood, we should note that there are many critics of Jameson's argument and his use of the idea. Frosh (1991) has highlighted, for instance, how Jameson and other theorists of 'postmodern schizophrenia' refuse to account for the specificity of the 'psychotic' process in terms of class, race or gender differences which underwrite subject formation. The point in highlighting this contested understanding of 'postmodern schizophrenia' is to emphasise that, regardless of whether postmodernism (if we can even establish this as a coherently understood concept) has an inherent

relation to 'schizophrenia', either in terms of its metaphorical similarities or shared phenomenological space, what we can note is a tight nexus of interrelated ideas around the figure of PKD. Acknowledging the potential influence of such ideas on my own interpretation and reading of *Exegesis* is paramount. Without this, there is a danger that I may simply reproduce these attempts to correlate psychopathological states with the postmodern cultural domain in which PKD sits. Although I have touched on the relevance of 'postmodern schizophrenia' to the cultural reception of PKD's work, we should also note how another aspect of 'psychosis'- paranoia- helped shaped the cultural milieu in which PKD sat.

Much has been written about the paranoia infused within American society during the latter half of the twentieth century. The cold war era that PKD lived through is often associated with a politics of fear, conspiracy theory and a generally suspicious cultural persuasion (see, Melley 2000; Reisch 2012; Dunne, 2013). Richard Hofstadter (1964) coined the idea of a 'paranoid style' in American politics in the mid 60's, and this is undoubtedly reflected in PKD's imagined worlds and science fiction landscapes.<sup>55</sup> In keeping with this, Strowa (2008), in her work on PKD's relation to this cold ward climate of paranoia, adopts the concept of 'allegories' to explain the way in which many of the characters in his novels come to understand their predicament as one immense allegory; one that is invested with some deeper symbolic meaning that they only begin to uncover following an initial paranoid reaction to a series of bizarre events. This hermeneutic logic is further utilised by Carl Freedman (1984) in his attempts to outline a theory of paranoia drawn from Marx's notion of 'commodity fetishism'. For Freedman, PKD's novels illustrate a particular paranoid attitude that finds everyday items and objects a source of anxiety owing to their inherent spectral quality.

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<sup>55</sup> Alexander Dunst (2016), in his study on how Madness came to play a prominent part in America's political and cultural debates during the cold war, identifies PKD's *Exegesis* as a revealing source for unveiling the paranoia present in US society. Dunst pursues another line of enquiry in respect of the attunement of the *Exegesis* to its contemporary moment. He writes, "What emerges most forcefully from the *Exegesis*, however, is what I am tempted to describe by the same prefix as Dick's religiosity. If his theology is post-Christian, then the medical terminology is post-psychoanalytic. No one therapeutic ideology dominates the *Exegesis*. As for the authority figure of the healer or analyst, he is increasingly replaced by the ideology of self-help that flourished in the 1970's" (p.104).

PKD himself captured this best when he described the paranoid stance not as a fear of others but rather a fear of one's entire reality. He writes that the ultimate in paranoia:

is not when everyone is against you but when *everything* is against you. Instead of 'My boss is plotting against me,' it would be 'My boss's phone is plotting against me'. Objects sometimes seem to possess a will of their own anyhow, to the normal mind; they don't do what they're supposed to do, they get in the way, they show an unnatural resistance to change (1977, p.447).

Marx's comment that the products of human labour appear to be 'endowed with a life of their own' is, for Freedman, illustrative of a theory of paranoia that can be derived from PKD's thought. And once again we encounter a potential pitfall when it comes to analysing, reading or interpreting PKD's life and work. The concepts of 'schizophrenia' and paranoia are already heavily invested in his overall status. Whether his work is being used to bolster the claims of postmodernism's inherit relation to 'schizophrenia' or how his work channels a general paranoid stance within later twentieth century American life, it is hard to disentangle PKD, the individual subject and author, from the larger cultural milieu in which he has been placed. Of course, any author will to some degree reflect the cultural moment in which they write, yet PKD's work doesn't just reflect it, it positively embraces and extenuates it, perhaps more so than any other author of that period. What's more, the absolute centrality of paranoia to his work invites a tautological reading where paranoia re-doubles back on to itself from culture through PKD's psyche and back out into culture via his novels and writing. This tautology is hard to escape when we enter into any discussion regarding PKD's supposed mental state and the paranoid historical moment in which he lived. This tension between wanting to engage and simultaneously resist tautological analysis, I think, speaks to the difficulties in trying to separate the subject from the social or perhaps the clinic from culture.

To complicate matters still further, PKD himself was no stranger to reflecting on the nature of 'paranoid schizophrenia' and he read widely around the topic. I mentioned above that the 'postmodernism-schizophrenia' link is conjoined, for Jameson at least, by a concern for temporality or rather its altered nature under both conditions. PKD, likewise, touched on this issue in an essay

entitled *Schizophrenia and the Book of Changes* in 1965. In it, he elaborates his thoughts on the nature of this diagnostic category, arguing for it to be understood as an unresolved developmental state situated between his concept of personal and shared reality (*idios kosmos/koinos kosmos*). The Laingian resonance here between different senses of 'self' is further encapsulated when, in true anti-psychiatry style, PKD declares that 'schizophrenia' is far from "a retreat from reality, but on the contrary: the breaking out of reality all around" (1995, p.176). The temporal dimension comes to the fore when he argues that the 'schizophrenic', in some form, exists outside of usual time and causality. In PKD's reasoning, the 'schizophrenic' operates with an acausal time frame or one he terms 'synchronicity' (borrowing from Wolfgang Pauli and no doubt influenced also by Jung's use). Anthony Enns (2006), in his article on *Media, Drugs and Schizophrenia in the Works of Philip K Dick*, goes to some lengths to support this at first odd conception of 'schizophrenia' by utilising the work of Fredrick Kittler, a figure we encountered earlier, who commented upon the effects of time modulation and distortion due to modern forms of media technology. We shall return to this tight intersection between time, technological development and the impact on psychological states below when we address the temporal dimension within PKD's exegetic writing. For now, however, we can note that the reception of PKD's work and the underlying themes he returned to over a 30-year writing career are already associated with broader socio-cultural framings which are themselves indebted to certain understandings of 'psychosis'. This entanglement between his work and the historical landscape in which it took place takes on another level of added complication when we start to examine PKD's biography and his very own relation to madness.

### 5.3 PKD's Madness

If PKD's writing has become something of a reference point for a postmodern sensibility characterised as fragmented, alienated, and following Jameson and Baudrillard, possibly even 'schizophrenic', then mirroring his works of fiction (which often entail bumbling heroes succumbing to the anxieties of their uncertain predicament) details of his own life have come to suggest that PKD

himself was prone to periods of great mental instability and outward paranoia. Unpicking PKD's relation to forms of 'psychopathology' is no easy task. As stated, this is due, in part, to the way in which his life and writing have come to exist within a cultural domain that wishes to extenuate themes related to the instability of reality. PKD's fictional output and actual historical life at times get submerged by a desire to portray him as some harbinger of our collective postmodern existence, one that has a maddening effect on us all.

The second major issue with establishing any coherent sense of PKD's own psychological state is that his biography is a contested domain. Whatever can be said of PKD one thing is for certain - he revelled in the chance to participate in his own mythologizing and openly contradicted himself in the many interviews, writings and autobiographical reflections that have served as an archive with which to construct his life story. At times this appears intentional. PKD, often in a mischievous or playful manner, would actively over-dramatize, reconstruct or altogether fabricate the stories or well discussed elements of his life. Often, however, the actual difficulty in establishing facts in relation to PKD's life are beset by his, at times, chaotic behaviour as well as various personal problems that seemed to have impacted his ability to narrate his own life story. The difficulties in separating PKD, the man, from PKD, the myth, will present the main barriers to any discussion relating to his own emotional or psychological turmoil. We should note also the sheer number of biographies that are in existence. Although Lawrence Sutin's (2006) *Divine Invasion: A Life of Philip K. Dick* is often held up as the official biography, there exist many others. Emmanuel Carrère's (2006) controversial 'imaginative recreation' of PKD's life entitled *I am alive and you are dead: A journey inside the mind of Philip K. Dick* has gained a degree of widespread popularity. PKD's third wife, Ann R. Dick (1995) also penned her own account *The Search for Philip K Dick* and very recently, the graphic novel version *Philip K. Dick: A Comics Biography* (Queyssi & Marchesi, 2019) was released. PKD himself contributed towards his own written biography through many different articles and interviews that are contained now across several different publications: *What if Our World is Their*



*Heaven: The Final Conversation of Philip K. Dick* (ed. by Lee & Summers, 2001); *The Last Interview and Other Conversation* (ed. by Streitfeld, 2015); as well as the many different pieces contained with Lawrence Sutin's (1995) edited volume *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick* which also undoubtedly contribute to this burgeoning corpus of writing dealing with PKD's life. Kyle Arnold (2016) has written perhaps the first proper psychobiography of the author and his attempts to frame PKD's life in the respect of 'divine madness' is something we will return to shortly. Indeed, PKD's legacy, as contained within this corner of literary biography, shows no signs of letting up. Gollancz SF, the major science fiction publisher, has announced that at the end of 2020 they too will be releasing another biography of PKD, undertaken by Darryl Mason. Yet, despite all of these biographies, not one categorially places him as an individual who can be understood via one single psychiatric diagnostic label. Despite a near life long relationship with forms of psychotherapy and interactions with numerous psychiatrists, some of which resulted in him being detained in a psychiatric facility, there is a general reluctance to refer to PKD as either definitively 'psychotic', 'schizophrenic', suffering from 'bipolar disorder' or any other mental health classification. As such, he is not ever placed within the kinds of categories that are perhaps more familiar to the Mad Studies project. Titles such as 'expert by experience', 'psychiatric survivor' or 'mental health service-user' are not ones we will find associated with PKD's name either. He has not been psychiatrised to the extent that perhaps other authors, who have penned narratives of their psychological turmoil have - the ones we find being used as 'raw data' for research purposes that so present issues for Mad Studies thinkers.<sup>56</sup> And it is precisely this reason that makes the *Exegesis* such an intriguing document or archive with which to question the role of madness or 'psychosis' at play. There are many hints and questions around PKD's mental state during its composition, but it is yet to be placed within a framework lending itself solely to the 'psy-discourses'.

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<sup>56</sup> I am referring here to the work of Russo (2016) and Voronka (2015), amongst others, who have problematized the act of taking mad narratives and treating them as objective data from which analyses can be conducted.

In order to unpick PKD's biographical conundrum and any potential relation to madness or 'psychosis', I am here heavily indebted to Roger Luckhurst (2015) and his essay entitled *Diagnosing Dick*. Luckhurst's work here represents the most sustained serious engagement with PKD's biography and its possible relation to psychiatric diagnosis, and, I would argue, has no rival in terms of scholarly work that has been done on PKD's biography with the single focus on his relation to madness through the lens of the 'psy-discourses'. Following Luckhurst, I have utilised the widely accepted 'official' biography of PKD by Lawrence Sutin (2006) as a secondary source. Luckhurst offers us a potted history of various diagnoses that he received over a forty-year period. To begin, he draws attention to PKD's treatment for phobic anxiety and tachycardia by a Jungian psychotherapist in the 1940's, which was followed up in the 1950's with low doses of amphetamine semoxydrine. PKD himself identifies several breakdowns that followed, including one at the start of his enrolment at the University of California, Berkeley, aged 19. Luckhurst then points towards PKD's later self-diagnosis of this episode when in 1965 he described himself as a 'schizoid affective with a preschizophrenic personality'.

From here on, things become a little more complicated. We know that PKD suffered further breakdowns following the end of his third, fourth and then fifth marriages. Luckhurst highlights the familial connection to 'schizophrenia' with his Aunt having been diagnosed as a 'catatonic schizophrenic' who died in 1953, a possible precipitating factor to PKD's own breakdown shortly after. Sutin (2006) suggests that manic depression was to blame for PKD's visions, in 1963, of a 'malign iron god' in the sky, although raises PKD's use of 'certain chemicals' and 'psychedelic drugs' as possibly having their own part to play (p.127). In 1967, whilst heavily under the influence of Ritalin and his own non-prescribed batch of amphetamines, PKD was hospitalised as a paranoid or 'borderline psychotic'. A subsequent suicide attempt in May 1970 resulted in admission to a psychiatric ward in Marin county hospital and the Ross Psychiatric Clinic, where the attempt was attributed to what is now termed 'drug induced psychosis'. Luckhurst goes still further in tracing

PKD's trajectory through various psychiatric institutes and the different labels he collected along the way. In 1971, PKD was seen in the Orange County Mental Hospital and was at that time diagnosed with manic depression. Luckhurst draws attention to another suicide attempt in Vancouver in 1972, which "landed him in the notorious X-Kalay drug rehabilitation centre and then, following his return to California, he underwent treatment for symptoms variously diagnosed as manic depression, mood disorder, anxiety including agoraphobia, and also a bipolar condition" (2015, p.14). Needless to say, arriving at a clear concise diagnosis for PKD is hampered by his lifelong psychiatric career, to make no mention of his own self-diagnosis which has only served to confuse biographical facts further as PKD's life becomes enmeshed within half-truths and popular hearsay.

However, there remains one particular episode within Dickian folklore that, depending on one's viewpoint, is either attributable to what PKD himself once described as a 'total psychosis' or something altogether different. As the popular legend goes, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1974, whilst recovering from dental treatment and under the influence of strong painkillers (and the anti-psychotic drug, Lithium) a delivery woman from a local pharmaceutical store came to drop off prescribed medication. On answering the door and noticing a Christian fish symbol necklace that she was wearing, PKD claims to have been struck by a pink beam of light which he came to interpret as a form of communication emanating from a god-like alien life form he christened 'VALIS' (standing for Vast Active Living Information System). This entity then proceeded to impart information to him via a series of pictures and images, leading PKD to believe that he was inhabited by at least two different historical personas and that Ancient Rome was still in existence, supplanted onto present day Orange County. PKD further reasoned that the Roman Empire was still in fact engaged in a centuries old conflict with certain 'Christian sects' and that our present reality was an elaborate fiction designed to conceal this (something he later came to refer to as the Black Iron Prison). The events - or PKD's own short hand for them, '2-3-74' - would be subject to interpretation and further reinterpretation for the remainder of his life. The major document to this is his obsessive

hypergraphic *Exegesis* - a 10,000-page investigation into these events and their place in the universe. Although much of PKD's *Exegesis* attempted to frame this within an overtly theological system, his use of psychiatric, psychoanalytic and pseudo-neurological terminology was never far from his reasoning. It is worth mentioning also that the events of '2-3-74' have themselves entered into a kind of quasi-religious mythology surrounding PKD's life. Consequently, PKD has, for some, come to embody the role of a new age guru or the prophet of some spun out Californian science fiction religion in the style of L. Ron Hubbard (see Mckee, 2003). PKD himself contributed to this mythologizing when he used these experiences to develop his semi-autobiographical novels *VALIS* (1981) and later *The Divine Invasion* (1981). One need look no further than Robert Crumb's illustrated account of '2-3-74' (see appendix) to see how these events have been integrated into an array of pop culture formats, which has only made the task of understanding them that much more complex.

We can undoubtedly recognise a diagnostic muddle which is mired not only by the numerous official labels PKD received but by the intrusion of his own self-analysis and furthermore, the entanglement of his life with the fiction of which he wrote. Luckhurst's argument, however, is that PKD's ever-changing diagnostic states can be read against a history of twentieth century changes in psychiatric and social theory on the nature of madness and paranoia and this is what I find particularly useful in my own attempts to align the *Exegesis* with 'psychotic' writing. Madness is forever in a state of flux and just like PKD's lifelong experience of psychiatrisation, interpreting them is an open, porous endeavour where one should resist temptation to arrive at a definite diagnostic label or succinct psychopathological state to describe something with a rich and, at times, contradictory history. In keeping with this, Luckhurst points towards the work of Carl Freedman (1984) cited above, who situates PKD's paranoia not in the realm of individual pathology but in relation to a social or political critique that draws on 'paranoid schizophrenia'. He quotes once again the work of Jameson, Baudillard and Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* as being instructive

examples of this. Utilising Ian Hacking's (1986) work on 'dynamic nominalism' which emphasises how the emergence of new labels or diagnoses in themselves result in new personality types, patterns of behaviour or subjective positions, Luckhurst suggests that PKD, who was keenly interested in psychology and psychiatry, was susceptible to this very process. For instance, the parallels between PKD's '2-3-74' experience and the 'influencing machine' as portrayed by Victor Tausk (1919) are easy to spot. Luckhurst believes PKD would also have been aware of the popular 1950's account of one woman's personal experience of 'schizophrenia' - Barbara O'Brien's (1958) *Operators and Things*. Both of these may have assisted him in his construction and elaboration of his own possible 'paranoid schizophrenic' state. Definitive diagnosis in respect of PKD is, therefore, beset by an array of theoretical, historical and popular interpretations that, whilst offering a colourful backdrop to PKD's biography, doesn't make for an easy argument that PKD was categorically 'psychotic'. As Luckhurst states in closing, diagnosing PKD:

is only to diagnose an understanding of subjectivity that is always in the process of making itself up, alert to the alluring promise of the next diagnostic nosology appearing on the horizon, offering a promise of a final authoritative self-definition (2015, p.27).

Ultimately, any attempt at arriving at diagnostic certainty has to grapple with the question as to what those diagnostic labels mean as they themselves are contested. This is to make no mention of the historical ambiguity that accompanies such labels as they consistently shift over time. In many respects, if I am to remain faithful to the spirit of the Mad Studies project, efforts to arrive at one authoritative understanding based on psychiatric nosology, diagnostics or classification is in effect repeating the very same manoeuvre of whitewashing individual experience by expert knowledge. The same mechanism is at work in utilising mad narratives to further intellectual aims as with the task of analysing all of PKD's biography to arrive at a distinct and singular understanding of his mental state when writing the *Exegesis*. I believe this should be avoided at all costs. Not only does it raise important ethical questions but glosses over the fact that any such diagnostic label that could be applied to the figure of PKD will be a heavily fraught domain of knowledge.

#### 5.4 The *Exegesis* & Current Scholarship

Current scholarship on PKD's *Exegesis* is somewhat limited. Due to it having only been published in 2011 and due perhaps also to its intimidating size, this is not altogether unsurprising. The most significant contributions available are collected together in Part Four of an anthology of essays dedicated to PKD's life and work, as edited by A. Dunst and S. Schlensag in 2015. The last three essays in the collection tackle the *Exegesis* and I will here provide a summary of their arguments and insights as well as the possible relevance to my overall thesis. I will begin with Richard Doyle's *Stairway to Eleusis, or: Perennially Philip K. Dick* which is an expanded version of an afterword published within the *Exegesis* itself. Doyle's (2015) opening comments attest to his own 'seeking out' of the *Exegesis* over many years, believing it to have contained almost prophetic like insights into the coming information age and "the world of pure consciousness and the realities that ensue from it" (p.194). This 'seeking out' for Doyle brought him to the earlier versions or fragments of the *Exegesis* available prior to the 2011 edition. PKD himself 'leaked' the existence of it out into passages contained within Horselover Fats (*VALIS*'s main protagonist) 'Tractate', itself a fictionalised version of the *Exegesis*. Next came the 1991 Underwood edition, edited by Lawrence Sutin, which contained small fragments which was soon followed up in 1995 where the *Exegesis* was given the 'last word' in a collection of PKD's philosophical and literary works titled *The Shifting Realities of Philip K Dick*. Such fragments dispersed over different collections and semi-autobiographical works offered Doyle and no doubt many others a tantalising if not frustrating glimmer into this much sought after work. Doyle stresses again that it was not until Pamela Jackson undertook her 'absurdly epic editorial task' that the *Exegesis* has been available in full (see, [Zebrapedia.psu.edu](http://Zebrapedia.psu.edu)) with the published abridged version accompanying it.

PKD's epic quest for understanding as contained within the thousands of handwritten notes, Doyle argues, makes it:

comparable only to Sufi Ibn Arabi's 15,000-page modern edition of *al-Futûhât al-makkiyya* ('Meccan Openings') as a likely single-author text. PKD's arguments,

diagrams, summaries, breakthroughs and premature conclusions all put him, along with *Arabi*, squarely within what Aldous Huxley called 'the Perennial Philosophy'" (2015, p.195).

Huxley's 'perennial philosophy' speaks to PKD's epic undertaking not just in its concern for tying up 'fragments of truth' across hugely disparate theological systems but in its ability to conjoin Eastern and Western religious traditions. Huxley's well known investigation incorporated Tao Buddhism and Brahmin scriptures alongside Christian mystics in an attempt to distil such diverse religious traditions into one profound truth. Doyle argues that PKD's writing itself served as a kind of Tibetan tantra or 'core shamanism' whereby he was able to "periodically dissolve himself into language itself – what he names most consistently as the Logos, the Greek term for both 'speech' and reason" (ibid. p.197). This dissolving into language, or Logos, results, for Doyle, in PKD abstracting himself from his own writing. The result is that the *Exegesis* takes on an almost autonomous quality as the VALIS experience conditions an 'involuntary chain of mental events' within PKD's mind. Indeed, PKD begins to see connections everywhere which engenders within him a heightened spiritual or quasi-religious sense. Writing of such immense and at times manic proportions leads to PKD's experience of the divine. To quote Doyle again:

under the influence of his own writing, Dick seems to have observed himself as an abstraction – not in the sense of a deadened thing taken out of its context, but in the sense that software engineers discuss 'layers of abstraction': an act of metacognition or description that at once detaches from and observes layers of the system (p.199).

If such an experience is at all attainable then it is perhaps not too difficult to imagine it taking on a religious significance as one observes oneself and the world around from a heightened vantage point.

Following on from Doyle, Erik Davis (2015) offers an account of '2-3-74', the series of revelatory insights PKD experienced which proved the trigger for his undertaking of the *Exegesis*, after which he turns to PKD's 'occasional but significant hermeneutic use' of one near Eastern text from antiquity, the *Hymn of Souls*. Davis argues that this particular text assisted PKD in accounting

for the '2-3-74' visions as well as "elaborate his notion of anamnesis .... and identify, or at least name, one of the personalities that sometimes seemed to possess him" (p.175). Davis argues that PKD's writing, in this instance, cannot be properly understood without moving away from a 'secular bias' that runs through much of the commentary on PKD's later theological work and science fiction in general. Indeed, Davis expressly argues that such a position will continue to obscure our view of such 'visionary productions' and that by de-valuing such esoteric or outwardly religious experiences we will miss crucial insights that PKD has to offer. By collapsing all of these experiences and his writing into forms of psychopathology, Davis argues that PKD's concern for the sacred is worryingly overlooked. And it is within the tradition of Gnosis, one of the dominant themes of the *Exegesis*, that Davis undertakes his analysis of PKD's exegetic writing.

The *Hymn of the Soul* or the *Hymn of the Pearl* that PKD refers to during various stages of the *Exegesis* is a fable contained within the apocryphal Acts of Thomas, believed to be a third century Christian text of Syriac origin. Constructed as a song delivered by Thomas to other prisoners, it tells the story of a prince who is sent to Egypt to retrieve a pearl from a serpent or dragon. Once there he is seduced by the Egyptians, thereby forgetting his homeland and his original task. His father, the King, subsequently sends him a letter rousing him from forgetfulness enabling him to resume his task and return home. Davis cites PKD's referencing of the fable in his personal correspondence with friend Claudia Bush, as well as in other entries to the *Exegesis*. The story's themes of spiritual awakening, homecoming and transformation serve Davis as a useful framework for understanding some of PKD's preoccupations following the '2-3-74' experiences. In relation to this, Davis points towards PKD's concern for anamnesis, or his belief in the ability of the right side of the brain to recollect knowledge previously unknown, which he at times frames as a form of collective unconscious. This interplay between hidden and overt knowledge, or knowing and non-knowing, is underscored by Davis as he demonstrates how PKD seems to have actively played with this dynamic, both in his recounting of his own past awareness of the *Hymn* as well as in other facts



related to his life in general. His biography is littered with contradictions and inaccuracies, in no small part due to PKD's own recollection of certain events. Often it has been noted that PKD claimed to be unaware of something or some particular event only to have earlier evidenced the opposite. Whether these are examples of PKD toying with interviewers and biographers to add an air of mystery to his public image or actual instances of PKD disavowing certain knowledge remains highly debatable. Whatever the case, PKD's own recounting of the '2-3-74' events can be seen as an exercise in possible subterfuge or as Davis terms a "hermeneutics of forgetting and remembering that performs and inscribes the ironies of the modern gnostic intellectual, who knows that non-knowledge is at least as important as knowledge" (p.181).

Davis moves on to relate the significance of the *Hymn* to PKD's account of '2-3-74'. Central to this is the idea of 'the call', which conditions a reawakening in the receiver of the letter or, in PKD's case, via the pink beam of light emanating from a Christian fish symbol. In this sense, Davis positions PKD's *Exegesis* as a kind of 'soteriological feedback loop' whereby his text, rather than PKD himself, acts in a redemptive manner following this call to remembering. This messianism is well evidenced throughout the *Exegesis*; however, as Davis wishes to stress, PKD distances himself from such a role offering his writing this salvational function.<sup>57</sup> In closing, Davis acknowledges that despite the Gnostic parallels contained within the *Exegesis*, often his writing veers away from spiritual concerns and takes on the unmistakable characteristics of paranoia with conspiratorial overtones (particularly with regards to a letter PKD received from an unknown source in March 1974 and his later involvement with the FBI, something he later came to refer to as the 'Xerox missive'). Speaking of this, Davis writes:

for the paranoid, there is a surfeit of meaning; anything and everything in the field of signs might be amplified and conjoined into a meaningful constellation of earth-shattering proportions. In fact, large and tedious tracks of the '*Exegesis*', including

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<sup>57</sup> This concern for salvation is taken up by J. Burton in his 2015 monograph on PKD and his relation to the philosophy of Henri Bergson. Burton finds this salvific function evident in PKD's fabulation's that mirror Bergson's writing's on mechanism and resultant soteriology.

much of what the editors chose to leave out of the abridged 2011 edition, succumb to paranoia's claustrophobic connection machine (p.187)

He goes on to add:

these pages often abandon the field of philosophical or esoteric thinking to enter the feverish pulp of modern conspiracy theory, with Russian agents, satellites, and mind control devices playing a particularly prominent role (p.187).

It seems PKD's Gnostic sensibility, for Davis at least, quickly gets overtaken by the classic hallmarks of paranoid madness.<sup>58</sup>

The last critical discussion of the *Exegesis* and one that may have the most relevance to my own interest into the cultural interpretations of 'psychotic' writing relates to James Burton's (2015) analysis entitled *From Exegesis to Ecology*. He begins with the assertion that one of the most significant 'transversal themes' of the twentieth century was the rise of environmentality, or rather the manner by which previous seemingly unconnected or disparate elements came to be viewed as part of larger ecological or environmental systems. He writes:

Beyond the flourishing ecological sciences and associated environmentalist social movements, across a wide range of spheres, from geography to politics, from psychology to computing and the rise of digital media, things that had previously been seen as functioning in isolation - organisms, minds, nations, objects, systems - came to be understood as inseparable from their environments (p.209).

Burton expressly questions whether the *Exegesis* could only now be published and receive a critical reception owing to these very developments across the sciences and humanities. Focusing on the changing nature of literary criticism, he identifies a shift over the twentieth century from forms of analysis that identified the text as a largely 'self-confined autonomous object' (Russian formalism, new criticism) to modes of enquiry that situated the text within much broader historical, political or

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<sup>58</sup> Erik Davis has entered into interpretation and reflection of the *Exegesis* in other works independent of this essay. His earlier book (2015) *TechGnosis* briefly touches on the relevance of the *Exegesis* to his thesis that technological development and the age of information necessarily contain a spiritual or religious character permeating through them. His latest work *High Weirdness* (2019) tackles the *Exegesis* in more detail. Much of this is an extended discussion of the article highlighted above, however, Davis does move past this to situate PKD's writing with that of the lives of Terrance McKenna and Robert Anton Wilson to demonstrate how their weird counter cultural offerings do in fact characterise a larger cultural persuasion emanating from the west coast of America that was in tune with radical technological, political and social change.

ideological contexts (Marxism, feminism, structuralism). Moreover, Burton argues that literature found itself becoming submerged within wider technical and media contexts of which he associates the work of Marshall McLuhan and Friedrich Kittler as being the most prominent examples. As such, his attempts to read the *Exegesis* in an ecological vein are only made possible via the developments of which the text itself is already a part. Burton proceeds to set out a formal analysis of the *Exegesis* using the ecology paradigm as a framework. He firstly acknowledges the highly eclectic nature of the text, which incorporated a diverse set of textual and non-textual objects. The list, although not exhaustive, includes various:

textual phenomena, including encyclopaedia articles, his own science fiction (sf) novels, and, perhaps inevitable, earlier entries of the 'Exegesis' itself. Yet with these were intermingled numerous other non-textual materials – dreams, symbols, snippets of popular culture, personal and political events, such as the death of his cat Pinky and the resignation of Nixon, physical objects, such as a necklace bearing the Christian fish symbol worn by the girl delivering pain medication to his door, or a small wooden figure of a saint with which he 'communed' (p.212).

The list, needless to say, goes on, giving the *Exegesis* an unruly frenzied quality which escapes easy summation, or any summation at all. This alignment of seemingly disparate if not random objects, events and occurrences is the first rationale for Burton's adoption of an ecological analysis to the text. The manner by which PKD assembles these elements and then reads into them a connectivity that is at work irrespective of the subject who's doing the assembling is, as our previous commentators have noted, very striking. In this sense we again get close to the paranoid 'connection machine' highlighted above. Burton moves on to align this process of assemblage and connection to the strenuous work undertaken by Walter Benjamin (2002) in the *Arcades Project*, as well as the Dadaist technique of *bricolage*. To this I would add later variants, such as Burroughs' 'cut up method' (see *The Nova Trilogy*, 1961) of which PKD himself was an admirer. Later, Burton draws comparison with the notion of the rhizomatic book encapsulated in Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) *A Thousand Plateaus* which comprises heterogeneous elements arranged on a horizontal plain or surface. The last two thinkers Burton draws on to situate PKD's writing and the ecological paradigm are ones that

are familiar to us from my earlier chapters; Friedrich Kittler and the notion of *écriture automatique* as well as the already mentioned Felix Guattari and his concept of 'ecosophy'.

We noted previously in respect of Schreber and the 'Discourse Network of 1900' how the introduction of mechanised writing techniques and new forms of communication or media technology resulted in an autonomous style to modern discourse; one that is not too far removed from certain definitions of madness. As Burton points out, PKD frequently positions himself as the passive receiver of information from a computer-like artificial intelligence, resulting in his writing taking on an autonomous quality. This mirrors Doyle's comments above which, likewise, stress how PKD's writing was conditioned by an 'involuntary chain of mental events' emanating from the VALIS entity. Indeed, much of PKD's own commentary on this dynamic is couched in the terminology of cybernetics and informatics where one lifeless machine communicates or rather relays information to the other. This 'writing without a subject', Burton reasons, finds its fullest expression in Kittler's (1999) analysis of the typewriter and its ensuing effects. The advent of the digital age could well be seen to have further extenuated this process. This correlation between the *Exegesis* and a cybernetic paradigm pertaining to information transfer that Burton draws attention to is something I shall return to in Chapter 8 in much greater detail.

Burton follows on by utilising Guattari's concept of 'ecosophy' (2000) as a means to understand PKD's decentring of his sense of self. Guattari proposes an 'ethico-political-aesthetic' paradigm to enforce the idea that any emancipatory action should take place across a number of different sites and that it cannot be contained solely to the psyche, the socius or the environment. PKD repeatedly within the *Exegesis* speaks of the breakdown of his own subjective state into any number of temporal and material dimensions; ones that Burton believes strikes of Guattari's "different logic of .... Intensities, of auto-referential existential assemblages" (2000, p.44). Furthermore, Burton draws a comparison between the target of Guattari's ecosphere, 'Integrated World Capitalism' and PKD's own 'Black Iron Prison'. Perhaps the most valuable contribution

Burton's work can make to my own use of 'psychotic' text is his thoughts on the way in which PKD's *Exegesis* was in a certain manner finely attuned to a particular sensitivity of the time, or rather, a particular cultural transformation that was taking place in mid-1970's California. Burton reminds us that the digital age, an age composed of interconnectivity on an unprecedented scale, found its genesis in 70's California. In fact, the year of PKD's divine revelation '1974' also coincides with the term 'internet' appearing in print for the first time. The ecological paradigm was also in vogue following the publication of James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis' (1974) papers proposing the Gaia theory and Gregory Bateson's (1972) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. In addition, I would add the emergence of 'second order cybernetics', developed in the mid 1970's, stressing the importance of autonomy and the self-organising capability of complex systems. Likewise, the systems theory of Nikolas Luhmann (1975) and Karl Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1969) was widely popular during the time in which PKD was penning his account of '2-3-74'. From this we can draw some parallels between our earlier discussions on Schreber's ability to channel various modernist impulses and PKD's own fine attunement to the social and historical resonances of his time. One is tempted here to adapt Santner's (1996) book title and state that the *Exegesis* could perhaps be rechristened as *My Own Private California: Philip K. Dick's Secret History of (Post) Modernity*.

From the work undertaken on the *Exegesis* thus far, I am keen to stress the recurring attempts to tie the *Exegesis* with the culture milieu in which it is placed. The emphasis on the role of information, cybernetics, and to some extent Burton's ecological paradigm, suggest that the *Exegesis* is able to reveal to us something profound about its historical moment. The question for me going forward is whether I can incorporate a particular understanding of madness, or indeed, 'psychosis' in line with this cultural reading so that madness does not become something extraneous to culture as such. If the mad writing of PKD can, in a similar fashion, open up our knowledge and understanding of certain facets of mid to late twentieth cultural life, then not only does this do something to our conceptualisation of madness but it may offer us the means to move past rather restrictive

articulations within Mad Studies that designate interpretation of mad text as either epistemically violent or necessarily unethical. In order to make this manoeuvre, it is vital that we recognise the contributions psychoanalysis and its critique in the guise of Deleuze and Guattari make. Both frameworks will be employed now as I attempt a reading that holds onto madness and culture simultaneously. In doing so, I shall also be indebted to the focus on socio-technological developments that Santner and Kittler examine so closely in the course of reading Schreber's *Memoirs*. An examination that, likewise, can be traced in Burton's and Davis' work on the *Exegesis*.



## Chapter 6.1: Interpreting the *Exegesis* through a Psychoanalytic Lens

*"The other night as I was going to sleep I was wondering who could "de-stegenographize" the hidden material in my writing – and the spirit responded with '[those who are] conscious'."* - Philip K Dick (2011, p.259).

Over the coming three chapters, this challenge posed by PKD will be taken up as I provide different but nevertheless complimentary interpretations of the *Exegesis*. Building on the insights gathered over the course of the thesis so far, I will analyse PKD's text utilising the initial methodological framework set out earlier (i.e. symptomatic versus surface reading) to essentially 'de-stegenographize' the *Exegesis*. PKD's concern for 'hidden material' is apt for our first analytical engagement with his writing. What is hidden requires a process of unearthing, revealing or excavating to be seen. Symptomatic reading, as we previously noted, strives to do just this; to reveal hidden operations at work within a text whilst maintaining a particular focus on depth as that which conditions surface level phenomena. Just as Freud (1911) and Lacan (1955-56) offered a clinical interpretation of Schreber's *Memoirs* via an examination that concerned itself with revealing hidden dynamics (unconscious psychic process, logic of the signifier) I will engage in a similar reading of the *Exegesis*.

I will structure this in three overlapping areas. The first will be via a close examination of PKD's, at times, idiosyncratic use of language with a particular focus on his use of neologisms and autonyms. Secondly, I will examine comments he makes in respect of his body and the process of metamorphosis he states he is undergoing. Lastly, I shall argue that the entire *Exegesis* can be read as a '*sinthomatic*' endeavour, utilising Lacan's theory of the *sinthome*. Former discussions on Schreber and his presenting symptoms will be touched upon throughout the chapter as he provides an important counterpart to many of PKD's preoccupations. By focusing upon symptoms at the level of language, the body and jouissance, this reading will effectively be following Lacan's tripartite structure referencing the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. All three become intertwined in the



process of PKD's writing itself. In effect, this chapter essentially sets out the argument for the *Exegesis* to be positioned as a 'psychotic' text via a symptomatic/*sinthomatic* reading covering all three domains. I offer the following analysis via the psychoanalytic lens of 'psychosis' as one avenue for our attempts to enter into the *Exegesis* and organise it around a conceptual apparatus.

## 6.2 'Psychosis' at the Surface

PKD held a lifelong fascination with elements of psychology and psychopathology. He read widely and was certainly familiar with many of the classic textbooks of psychiatry as well as psychoanalysis. He freely quoted Carl Jung, Ludwig Binswanger and Julian Jaynes and would undoubtedly have been able to identify the classic hallmarks of madness that he often interwove within the plots of his many novels. As his biographers have noted, PKD repeatedly questioned his own sanity and received a number of official 'psychotic' diagnoses over the course of his psychiatric career (see Sutin, 2006).<sup>59</sup> Following the reported events of 3-74, perhaps no surprise that contained within his near decade long writing obsession attempting to uncover the 'truth' of his experience, he returned to the language and terminology of 'psychosis' to provide meaning to his world.

There are a dizzying number of elements at the surface of PKD's text that would be suggestive of delusional thinking, moments of hallucinatory feeling, or indeed outward paranoia. One can open nearly any page of the *Exegesis* and be met with claims or recounted moments that appear nothing if not overtly 'psychotic'. In no particular order, we may recall the notion of his immediate surroundings in Fullerton, California peeling away to reveal ancient Rome at work in his present moment; a god-like satellite circling the earth imparting streams of information down to PKD via a pink beam of light; a vast prison-like complex enslaving the entire globe or indeed the intrusion of his 'AI voice' over the remaining years of his life. This is to make no mention of what we

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<sup>59</sup> The editors of the *Exegesis* ask whether this questioning of his own sanity indicates his actual remove from supposed madness. David Gill writes that "Simply put, crazy people do not question their own sanity like this, at least as a general rule" (2011, p.371). I would contest this and point towards Schreber's own querying of his mental state as just one example of 'psychotic's' ability to self-analyse.

might perhaps term the more 'conventional' aspects of his paranoia concerned with the FBI, communist agents and the perceived surveillance he believed he underwent. However, I don't wish to dwell on these overt delusional sounding elements here and instead focus initially on PKD's own reasoning where he posits a possible 'psychosis', based on his own knowledge of psychology, as the cause of his predicament. Take for example the following passage where he writes:

Thus I must face the fact that I have been psychotic, and in at least 2 different ways:

- (1) Paranoiac schizo from late 71 to 3-74.
- (2) Complete schizo breakdown in 3-74, lasting a year, during which time I gradually recovered – and not back to the paranoid delusional state that had preceded it (but to anxiety neurosis – my vertigo and depression) (2011, p.242).

And then sometime later,

I went over the brink into psychosis in '70 when Nancy left me – in '73 or so I tried to come back to having an ego, but it was too fragile and there were too many financial and other pressures; the hit on my house and all the terrors of 1971 had left their mark – and so, especially because of the IRS matter, I suffered *total* psychosis in 3-74, was taken over by one or more archetypes. Poverty, family responsibility (a new baby) did it. And fear of the IRS (ibid, p.372).

Both statements point towards periods of personal turmoil related to marital and financial pressures that culminated in 3-74 with a 'total psychosis' or 'schizo breakdown' as he terms it. Fatherhood is also touted as a potential source, one that resonates with the paternal issues detected in both Freud and Lacan's analysis of 'psychotic' aetiology. Whatever the case, PKD is openly on the surface positioning his outlandish experiences in this instance in direct relation to 'psychosis'. What is so striking is that, referenced within a similar time period, is his reasoning that this 'psychotic' episode in 3-74 actually provided him the means to overcome his fragile sense of self or ego. For instance:

All right, all this looks psychotic. But due to my response, I have become entirely freed from paranoid feelings, fear, beliefs, delusions, expectations – completely (p.241).

And again,

A stronger, newer, healthier personality was able to form in place of the old, one free of the paranoid dynamism. It turned out to be a psychotic delusion on my part that the FBI was after me. The brief total collapse into overt schizophrenia *cured* me (cf. John W. Perry) because I was able to reach into my collective unconscious for new potentialities, and establish a broader, non-delusional personality on a more viable basis (p.241).

What we have here points towards PKD's belief that his self-identified 'psychotic' experiences actually provided the means for him to stabilise his fragmented state of mind that was causing acute paranoia and distress. We will recall that for Freud and Lacan alike, the delusional construction or paranoid worldview for the 'psychotic' can function to shore up a disintegrating psyche and effectively stave off complete subjective breakdown. Although the overwhelming majority of writing contained within the *Exegesis* would testify to PKD's belief that he was *not* in fact 'psychotic' but witness to, and participant in, something of great cosmic importance, these rare moments where he questions his state of mind, and associates it with a potential process of healing, strikes an important cord with Freud's assertion (1911 p.70-71), augmented by Lacan (1955-56), that the delusion itself is not the illness but rather an attempt at cure; an attempt to reinstate a social bond. My aim is to hold this in mind over the course of the chapter when we return to the possible salvific function writing as a whole had for PKD in the context of the *Sinthome*. However, to really make the case for the *Exegesis* being positioned as a 'psychotic' text, it is necessary to delve a little deeper, to unearth some hidden operations and concealed dynamics in order to properly mobilise the structure of 'psychosis'. I shall do so by working at the level of the text. Instead of focusing on what PKD had to say about 'psychosis', I shall now examine his actual use of language itself and the formal qualities of the text that may be suggestive of psychotic structure.

### 6.3 Idiosyncratic Language

As discussed in Chapter 2, for Lacan (1955), 'psychosis' is nothing if not a 'disturbance in language'. Due to the much referenced 'foreclosure of the paternal metaphor' a hole or rent is opened up within the symbolic order. In order to recognize, and then presumably treat, those deemed 'psychotic' one must focus in on, at the level of the signifier, peculiarities or odd aberrations within the subject's use of language. These strange anomalies within language are utilised to assist the subject in their navigation through the symbolic order which can appear fragmented or disarticulated. Even outside the psychoanalytic tradition, much effort has been spent focusing upon

the particular relation schizophrenics, for instance, have to language; the 'psychotic's' so-called inability to use metaphor as well as the role of polysemy and echolalia perhaps being some of the more notable examples. Likewise, the use of neologisms has been heavily emphasized in 'psychotic' speech (see Chaika, 1990; Delisi, 2001 & Reiber & Vetter, 1994). Annie Rogers (2016) takes up this relation between 'psychosis' and the 'enigma of language' within a broadly Lacanian framework. In her work she coins the phrase *Incandescent Alphabets* to describe the way in which 'psychotics' use language in a singular, idiosyncratic way. For Rogers, delusion is a new language fashioned together from imposed voices and scraps of the symbolic world. Her wide range of examples and textual sources include many of those which we have encountered over the course of this thesis including Joyce, O'Brien and of course, Schreber.

As Rogers, and many more have noted, language often holds a particular fascination or appeal for 'psychotic' subjects. And in this sense, PKD's exegetic writing is no different. One of the many themes vying for space throughout his personal recounting of the events of 3-74 is his own particular understanding of language and systems of communication, ones that increasingly come to be presented through a digital or information technology paradigm. His interest in language is present from beginning to end and is remodelled and reworked countless times over the *Exegesis*' eight- year composition. For instance, during the early years of the *Exegesis*, PKD writes that to understand his conceptualisation of the universe then:

A superior analogy would be to regard the universe as consisting of language, that is, a communications network of signalling systems and messages which create cosmos out of chaos, harmony out of random collision (2011, p.81).

PKD's conceptualisation of the universe comprised of language, or a system of communication, is a recurring motif throughout his writing. This system of communication or information transfer is conceived here as providing order to the universe. It is not simply an attribute or fundamental component of it, but rather the means by which order is created out of chaos. The idea that language, and in particular the utilisation of it, may be able to provide a degree of consistency or

stability to an otherwise fragmented, disordered existence again strikes of previous discussions which highlight the way in which 'psychotic' subjects harness an idiosyncratic use of language to provide consistency to their life world. "The enigma of language in psychosis," writes Rogers, "joins messages to codes, but not to a *given* code; speaking entails making a new language out of what were meaningless messages" (2016, p.119). This reordering of random messages into a new language in order to stabilise one's fragmented psyche highlights the often commonplace experience for 'psychotics' concerning the imposition of words and phrases into their conscious mind. Just as Schreber (1903) received his nerves and rays, resulting in him reconstituting them into his basic language or nerve-language (*Grundsprache*), so too does PKD write about the experience of language, or rather alien unknown words imposing themselves on him. Early on in the *Exegesis* when he is directly discussing the immediate events following 3-74, he writes:

I was hoping only for increased neural efficiency. I got more: actual information about the future, for during next three months, almost each night, during sleep I was receiving information in the form of printouts: words and sentences, letters and names and numbers – sometimes whole pages, sometimes in the form of writing paper and holographic writing, sometimes oddly, in the form of a baby's cereal box on which all sorts of quite meaningful information was written and typed, and finally gallery proofs held up for me to read which I was told in my dream "contained prophecies about the future," and during the last two weeks a huge book, again and again, with page after page of printed lines (2011, p.8).

Mostly, though, what I get is a lot of information, floods of it night after night, on and on (ibid. p.23-24).

And then,

As soon as I close my eyes information in the form of printed matter, visual matter such as photographs, audio stuff in the form of phonograph records – it all floods over me at a high rate of print out (p.24).

For PKD, information, both audio and visual, is imposed upon him, information which he states he is the passive recipient of. Likewise, some years later, one of PKD's bolder claims is that he came to be in receipt of a foreign language of which he had no prior knowledge or experience. He writes in 1978, "I also dreamed foreign words all of which turned out to be koine Greek" (p.345).

PKD later maintains that his new-found ability to understand elements of ancient Greek is directly attributable to the higher power with whom he is in communion. Whatever the case, PKD's writing attests to the experience of language, or in his terms 'information', imposing itself upon him. Whether it be foreign languages, audio recording or forms of information, he repeatedly evidences the process of having some alien system of information external to his conscious self-directed on him. It is out of these scraps of language and fragmented bits of the symbolic order that he begins to fashion his own understanding of the role and purpose of language and systems of information exchange. His own 'incandescent alphabet', is one that increasingly comes to reflect a technologized sensibility.

In keeping with this theme, and the particular relation to idiosyncratic language, it is worth examining the following passage in detail. Early on in his recounting of the experiences immediately after 3-74, PKD writes in respect of this imposition of information that:

One aspect of regarding this as an information transmission and reception-transduction system (like a teletype) might at last throw some light on the otherwise puzzling phenomenon of glossolalia when seized by the "Holy Spirit". In my reception of tachyon bombardment (assuming this is what it is, of course) I frequently either fail to transduce properly (error at the receiving end) or else there is a lapse of accurate transmission (as if teletype operator has his fingers on the wrong line of keys, etc.). When that happens, instead of seeing, in my dreams, the perfectly articulated English prose passages which would be the result of all components functioning correctly, I get gibberish like this: meaningless "names" and "words" and sequences of numbers which have no significance. Unless one is very, very careful to factor out, to use a scrupulous reject circuit of some kind (I suppose this would come with practice) one is confronted with the task of making sense out of random or inaccurate integers. I give these actual examples:

832	Command-Odd
835	G-12
5412960	5242681
Eleanor	P-13
Mr. Arensky	
Mrs. Aramcheck	
Sadasa Ulna	

(2011, p.11).

There are a number of elements in this passage worth reflecting on. Firstly, for PKD, his reasoning as to how and why he is receiving such 'gibberish' is based on a faulty technological system ('like a teletype') which transmits words, terms or phrases that are devoid of meaning. Schreber, we will remember, underwent similar experiences where he was unable to ascribe meaning to words or his own thoughts. Schreber refers to this as God losing "the capacity to say one single word" (1903, p.187) and compensates for this via his 'bellowing miracle,' his process of 'zeichnen' or 'picturing' as well as his 'little studies'. Lacan (1955-56) held this as evidence for the supposed gap or hole within the signifying order that brings a halt to the metonymic sliding of the signifier. For Lacan as we previously have noted, "at the heart of psychosis there is a dead end, perplexity concerning the signifier" (1955-56, p.194). PKD fails to 'transduce properly' due to a similar failure in the signifier's ability to transmit its meaning. The result is a series of words or fragments of information that are completely cut off from any larger referential system of communication. Lacan (1959) in "*On a Question....*" labels such instances of imposed language as examples of 'code phenomena'. 'Code phenomena', unlike 'message phenomena' are for Lacan, "specified in locutions that are neological in both their form [...] and usage" (1959, p.450). He adds that they are, "something fairly akin to the messages that linguists call 'autonomous', insofar as it is the signifier itself (and not what it signifies) that is the object of communication" (ibid). We can also refer to these odd, disconnected words as 'autonyms', those 'dialectally inert speech elements' that Vanhaule (2011) introduced to us in the context of Schreber's *Memoirs* earlier in Chapter 2. Schreber has a panoply of terms and phrases that he invested with a huge amount of meaning but a meaning accessible to him alone, examples of which include, 'nerve-contact' 'divine-rays' 'soul-murder' as well as the signifier 'Entmannen/Entmannung' ('unman/unmanning' or 'emasculate/emasculating'). The point being that these signifiers which are independent of any referential symbolic order take on a fundamentally different role within Schreber's discourse and come to reorganise his sense of

subjectivity in the wake of foreclosure. PKD, I would argue, similarly employs a vast network of neologism's and autonoms throughout his exegetic writing. In no particular order, readers of the *Exegesis* will be familiar with the following 'autonoms' that PKD tirelessly employs:

*BIP (Black Iron Prison), Firebright, homoplasmate, James-James, MMSK (macrometasomakosmos), ontogon, Tagore, Thomas, VALIS, Zebra,*

Whereas the isolated elements of language cited above ('Command-Odd', 'Mr. Arensky', 'Sadasa Ulna') appear enigmatic and un-interpretable when he first receives them, over the course of the *Exegesis* PKD utilises this series of neologism's and autonoms and they come to hold increased significance for his new-fangled cosmology. Many of them play an important function either as a form of alter-ego or as monikers for the divine presence with whom he is in contact. The term 'VALIS' is arguably the most important of them all as it becomes absolutely central to his newly invented science fiction inflected spiritualism. It serves as the cause for 3-74, the continued source for the receiving of information via a pink beam of light as well as the agency controlling the writing of the *Exegesis* itself. In keeping with Lacan's analysis, we can argue that PKD starts to build his delusional metaphor from these autonoms and neologisms. He transforms these early 'code phenomena' into 'message phenomena' as they begin to lose their enigmatic quality whilst reinserting them within his own idiosyncratic signifying chain. From this, he can be understood to be actively constructing his private delusional metaphor of which the *Exegesis* is testament to. PKD, by employing such words, terms and phrases starts to reconstruct his own sense of subjectivity which, as we shall see in later, involves a radically reworking of his sense of self. As Rogers argues, the 'psychotic' subject can:

succeed in establishing a new subjective position by adopting speech elements or autonoms that have been imposed, using them to identify a meaningful task, mission, or purpose. In this way, building delusion not only works to stabilise the experience of psychosis, but also to create a new position for the subject (2016, p.82).



Essentially, if we are to follow this logic as informed by Lacan's theorisations, then as PKD begins to rework his own private symbolic order there should be a direct effect on his sense of subjectivity, one that plays itself out in the field of the Imaginary: PKD's own corporeal body.

#### 6.4 Metamorphosis & The Automated Body

One of Schreber's most notable concepts, the one with which he attributes the very ability to produce his memories is the *aufschreibsystem*, roughly translated as his writing-down-system. We noted in Chapter 3 that for Kittler (1985) and Santner (1996), this writing-down-system, with its tendency towards an automated sensibility, channelled modernist preoccupations with mechanistic communicative processes and the resultant change in a collective sense of subjectivity, one that emphasised the automated nature of the body in response to received signals from the mind. Schreber sums up his *aufschreibsystem* in the following passage:

Books or other notes are kept in which for years have been written-down all my thoughts, all my phrases, all my necessities, all the articles in my possession or around me, all persons with whom I come into contact, etc. I cannot say with certainty who does the writing down (1903, p.123).

Schreber encapsulates a sense here of his writing being directed perhaps by something other than his conscious self. His thoughts, phrases and necessities, as he puts it, materialise in written form but the agency behind this process is one not immediately apparent. Indeed, Schreber often reverts to a machine-like model devoid of any operator to describe himself and many of the experiences he underwent. In fact, the role of 'mental automatism' has long been established within the realm of the 'psychoses'. As Lacanian analyst Darian Leader (2011) makes apparent, this is a striking example of the paranoid's belief in the exaggerated role of the Other, an Other capable of exerting force from outside onto the subject's body. He relates this to one of the key issues present within 'psychotic' subjects, namely the inability to localise libido resulting in a different conception of inside and outside, internal and external or the relation between subject and Other. If we remain with the

experience of having one's writing directed by an outside agency, we can see that this was a common issue for PKD. Many examples exist throughout his exegetic writing including the following:

let us say that I am inspired by a creative entity outside my conscious personality to write what I write (2011, p.13).

I feel I have been a lot of different people. Many people have sat at this typewriter, using my fingers. Writing my books (ibid, p. 22).

We *are* totally scripted, after all – rigidly, deterministically programmed (written: our roles engrammed in and onto us all). Which is the book and which the world? (p.331).

And then quite some time later,

*I qua author am a function of it!* I am a mouth piece for it, which is fine since it protects me (p.416).

Although many authors have testified to the experience of their writing taking on an automated quality, the sense of a work being produced without the author's complete conscious control, when we analyse these statements of PKDs symptomatically, and place them in context with associated themes pertaining to his bodily existence, it reveals to us a logic that would be suggestive of possible mental automatism; the reconfigured boundary between the subject's sense of an inner agentic self and the outer world. PKD's experience of an automated writing process, his own *aufschreibsystem* can be read here as a symptom which evidences something else at work, perhaps one not immediately apparent. Taken in isolation, PKD's experience of an automated writing process could be associated with any number of underlying issues. Placed within the wider context of the patterns and themes reverberating across the entire *Exegesis*, they could be interpreted via an understanding of a 'psychotic' structure at play. If we refer back to the realms of the Symbolic and Imaginary, and how such statements speak to both interrelated domains, we further strengthen our case.

PKD's engagement with the Symbolic order that we discussed earlier, his very ability to make sense of it and to commit forms of communication to writing seems to have a direct relation to the action of his body. His quotes above testify to the notion that his very process of writing is being directed by a body that he is not in direct control over. He is 'totally scripted', devoid of any agency

and a 'mouthpiece' at the will of an Other who controls or operates his physical being. At the start of *Seminar III* Lacan writes:

Since discourse, the lunatic's printed discourse, is at issue, it's therefore manifest that we are in the symbolic order. Now, what is the actual material of this discourse? At what level does the sense translated by Freud unfold? From what are the naming elements of this discourse borrowed? Generally speaking the raw material is his own body (1955, p.11).

Lacan is in effect telling us here that in the printed discourse of the 'psychotic' (or in his somewhat antiquated language, 'the lunatic') the body provides the site or the actual source for the symbolic particularities that play themselves out in the 'psychotic's' written text. Rogers, commenting upon this, likewise concludes that "the person who is psychotic has direct access to the Imaginary body" (2016, p.39). In 'psychosis', the Symbolic and the Imaginary become intertwined in a different manner to the neurotic. But what do we mean by this? If we use Darian Leader's schema (2011, p.67) for organising symptomology in respect of oedipal processes (i.e. the establishment of new meaning, the localisation of the body's libido and the establishment of distance from the object of the mother) then we can see that PKD's writings are attempts to resolve these first two concerns in their respective domains.

For PKD, when his existence is abruptly brought into question in 3-74, he has to reorder or reconstruct his symbolic life world to establishment a new sense of meaning. As a result, his body, or rather the body's libido also has to be re-fashioned, it has to be tamed via his new delusional metaphor. The body is the site that PKD will have recourse to in order to ground, or indeed localise, this new idiosyncratic system of meaning that he has built. This begins with a discussion on the subjective distance from his body during the process of writing. This automated action, PKD's *aufschreibsystem*, is in part a direct response to his new symbolic creation. At first, the enigmatic world of nonsensical signifiers creates a degree of detachment, one that is played out at the level of his physiology; a distance between his active thoughts and his writing practice which is literally bringing this new delusional world into being. As this progresses, the role of his own body becomes

much more pronounced. Schreber's *Memoirs* are also replete with instances of his body morphology radically changing in the wake of his apparent visionary revelations about the 'order of the world'. His transformation into a woman, his sense of 'voluptuousness' and the experience of having little men break his body apart are all examples of this drastic reorganisation of his bodily libido in tandem with the reorganisation of the symbolic order in which it is immersed. If the above logic holds, then we should see a similar occurrence unfold for PKD. For instance, he writes:

I was genuinely broken down, stripped down, torn down to my skeletal plating, like an insect who has woven a cocoon, and then I passed through months of uniquely and actually imaginable rebuilding processes, all adventitious to me, improving and teaching me, altering me – well, the "possession" part alone remade me in the most fundamental way indeed – and clearly as completely remaking me as can be conceived (2011, p. 191).

Not too dissimilar to Schreber who writes:

I frequently had – and still have regularly daily – the sensation that my whole skull had temporarily thinned; in my opinion this was brought about through the bony material of my skull being partly pulverized by the destructive action of the rays; but it is restored again by pure rays particularly during sleep (1903, p.147).

Both accounts testify to this process of breaking down and re-assemblage. The body is violently altered following the manifestation of 'psychosis'. And just as the symbolic world requires a process of reconstitution, so too does the body require a drastic rebuilding to align itself with the new sense of subjectivity that both Schreber and PKD construct for themselves. From the sense of having a strange uncanny distance between the body's actions and his own writing intentions, through to the actual decomposition of his entire corporeal body before finally metamorphasizing into something else entirely, we can state that PKD's relation to his own physical being is one of the predominant preoccupations he commits to his *Exegesis*.

I will trace this theme of PKD's metamorphosis beyond this chapter when we examine the potential socio-cultural interpretation that can be made of PKD's 'psychotic' text. However, we should note that the evidence for his sense of radical change into someone else, or perhaps even

better *something* else, can be located throughout the *Exegesis*. I offer the below as just a few examples:

it really did happen to me, and it is strange and I can't fully explain it – which is to say, name who what poured itself into me back in March and is still there, still here, I mean. Still in a symbiotic relationship with me (p.47).

What grows within me grows perhaps a new body as well as a new spirit, and discards both of the outer ones together (p. 64).

The golden fish necklace told me it was time; I began my work, like the worm constructing its cocoon. In order to die, it its original primal lower form, to be remade into a better newer creature! To fly up from the “sea” into the sky! (p.161).

He who was alive died, and someone else lives now in me, replacing me (P.192).

I have covered two domains in respect of the presenting symptomology within PKD's text. In terms of how they have played out at the level of the Symbolic, I have shown how particular uses of certain signifiers, signifiers imposed from an Other, are reworked into an idiosyncratic system of communication which ultimately leads to the creation of his own private delusional metaphor. In tandem with this process are the alterations in PKD's own body. Reading the text symptomatically at the level of the Imaginary demonstrates how PKD's reasoning about the changes in his own physical being are illustrative of a reorganisation of his bodily libido in the face of possible 'psychotic' decomposition. In keeping with a Lacanian psychoanalytic interpretation, just as a potential delusional metaphor concerning alien satellites and ancient Rome serves a supporting function within the symbolic, so too PKD creates a new relation to his own corporeal body to stabilise his sense of subjectivity. If we turn now to the role of the Real and how all three of these registers become intertwined within Lacan's later concept of the *Sinthome*, we can see again how the very process of writing itself serves as a means of stability by tying all three registers together to reinstate a social bond: one underwritten by the role of jouissance.

## 6.5 PKD-the-*Sinthome*

I introduced Lacan's (1975-76) later concept of the *Sinthome* in the closing discussion related to James Joyce in Chapter 2. Here I want to develop this in order to appreciate how PKD's text may accord to this newly fashioned idea of the symptom that Lacan places special emphasis on. This will also result in an augmented notion of the symptom with which to reincorporate into our critical reading practice, a '*Sinthomatic* reading'. By doing so, I will argue that the register of the Real, in particular the role of *jouissance*, plays out in the context of PKD's supposedly 'psychotic' text, whilst also understanding how his writing served as a kind of support or means to stabilise his subjectivity. The *Sinthome* represents one of the more notable concepts within the 'later Lacan' and is often positioned in relation to *Lalangue* and *Jouissance*; those concepts which mark a potential break with Lacan's earlier focus on the Symbolic. With this set of concepts, Lacan shifts his attention to the register of the Real; and this differentiation between the Symbolic and Real may be a useful one to delineate the difference between the classical symptom and the *Sinthome*. The former is generally understood (in Lacanian terms) as a coded message that reveals some unconscious truth in symbolic form, whereas the latter is perceived as a moment of pure 'non-sense', an idiosyncratic form of enjoyment or better yet, *jouissance*, that is beyond understanding. As Lacanian theorist Raul Moncayo states, "The *sinthome* is to the Real and to *jouissance* what the symptom is to the Symbolic and the signifier" (2016, p.49). Lacan argued that the *sinthome* should be seen as a creative knotting together of the registers of the Real, Symbolic and the Imaginary. He modelled this knotting on the Borromean pattern whereby if one ring is unknotted the other three subsequently come loose. Lacan identifies the *sinthome* as a fourth ring knotting together the tripartite registers. Moreover, he asserts that in instances of 'psychosis', what has occurred is precisely this unknotting of the four rings. It is then a creative means by which one invents or fashions their relation to the different modalities of reality. The chief example Lacan gives of how one can do so is via the operations of 'naming/nomination' and through the practise of writing, both of which are particular to the case of 'Joyce-the-*Sinthome*' (Miller, 2005).

The question of *Jouissance* plays an important role for Lacan in his reflections on Joyce's writing. Whereas Schreber transformed the invasion of *Jouissance* following the loss of phallic meaning into a paranoid transsexual system, Joyce, he asserts, is able to harness this *Jouissance* and rework it into an artistic product. In so doing, Joyce transforms this *Jouissance* into a form of 'enjoyment' (*jouis-sens*). In a way, he is able to tame it via the signifier resulting in the most strikingly idiosyncratic linguistic product. Lacan identifies the role the ego has to play in Joyce's psychic make-up, which doesn't act as it otherwise should, but nevertheless fulfils "an important function in structuring reality" (1975-6, p.147). Joyce was only able to stabilise his psychic world through the elevation of his name as a great writer and as such finds a compensation for his otherwise fragile place within discourse. In the same way that Schreber develops a delusional metaphor to order his world and in some sense reorder *Jouissance*, Joyce does so through a writing process which, at one and the same time, redirects evasive *Jouissance* and elevates his name in order that he can restore a social bond. As such, Lacan further moves away from any pathological notion of the symptom that requires some form of alleviating or treatment. In commenting on the role of the *sinthome* and Joyce's writing, analyst and writer Patricia Gherovici (2012) argues that:

*Jouissance* underpins the creation of a *sinthome* by which texts and the body are held together. Lacan's claim that Joyce is saved from psychosis by writing is well known. Similarly, Schreber is freed from seclusion by his memoirs. Let us note that for Lacan, Joyce's entire oeuvre is to be treated as a memoir. But Lacan's questionable biographical reading, nevertheless, is not on the side of psychobiography. I will argue that he approaches Joyce's work as a memoir to emphasize its function as *sinthome* (p. 275).

What Gherovici is highlighting here is the way in which Lacan takes all of Joyce's literary output and tries to demonstrate that it operates collectively as a *sinthome*. It is a creative endeavour that binds the three registers together whilst securing an ego for Joyce (or Joyce's literary name) thereby staving off possible 'psychosis'. The role of the body and its relation to textual production is key to any notion of the *Sinthome*.

So what is the relevance to PKD's mammoth writing project following the events of 3-74? We may be able to answer this via PKD's own self reflections. Many years into the *Exegesis*' composition, PKD questions the very purpose and worth of his creation. He writes in respect of his new cosmology:

If the above theory is wrong (and there is no negative hallucination and spurious reality laid over the real world – which is *quite* different than what seems to be) - then what has been the use of my writing? (p.344).

What indeed? My argument here is that the 'use' of PKD's writing, just like Joyce's literary output, was to stabilise his sense of subjectivity, to bind the three registers that had come apart for him during, and perhaps prior to, 3-74. The *Exegesis* can be argued to have served as PKD's very own *sinthome* by taming the bodily jouissance that was so apparent in our above discussion as well as elevating his sense of self by re-fashioning a new social bond. His newly reconfigured symbolic existence with the attendant changes to his body are actualised for PKD in his writing. It is through this textual production that PKD gives life to his delusional metaphor; he literally brings it into being which ultimately assists him in maintaining some form of coherence. The 'use' of his writing that he questions above can be understood via this very notion of the *sinthome*, a support or counterweight to the turmoil and distress wrought by his fragile mental state once the three rings of the Symbolic, Imaginary and Real threaten to come apart. If we stay with this idea of writing as a form of non-sense or an excess that serves as a support nonetheless, then perhaps we can come to understand the many lengthy passages within the *Exegesis* that seem to evidence this redirected form of jouissance; an 'enjoy-meant' in the act of writing itself, but a form of writing that appears devoid of meaning on the surface at least. Take for instance this lengthy passage:

Yes, that's it! The encircled BIP/magnet/pathenogin is being disassembled and incorporated into the brain/phagocyte/sphere, which process produces time and flux (v. Heraclitus). But it is not an equal contest: the sphere or brain although facing a formidable opponent *is* successfully dismantling it, although the process is not complete. It is the upper realm of Form I eventually making irreal the lower realm of Form II, *as Parmenides realized*. Form ii. The BIP, in the aspect of eternity *isn't there*; it's only there in the flux time *process*. The phagocyte has, like the



dragon, consumed itself starting with the tail; the BIP may be its own antecedent fossil self, blind and mechanical, at an earlier level of evolution – “matter” insentient compared to life and thought – brain. Thus the universe, the totality, organizes itself into the brain that I saw, by consuming itself, what we see as change, flux, time, process is sign of its *life*, it is alive and becoming more so – just as I, as microbit, did in 3-74. Hologram microbit, analogy of the whole (p.378).

This is just one of many passages within the *Exegesis* where PKD asserts that he has uncovered the true nature of 3-74 and by implication the universe/god (Yes, that’s it!) only to be followed by a rambling train of thought that darts between a number of highly obscure terms that become themselves self-referential. Despite my best efforts to follow PKD’s logic here, and the way in which he presents it as some profound insight, the passage comes across as devoid of meaning and lacking substance. However, in line with Lacan’s theory of the *sinthome*, we can argue that the many examples of these rambling ‘meaningless’ passages that make up large sections of the *Exegesis* serve not to actually illuminate PKD or the reader as to the true nature of the cosmos (although I would guess that is how they were intended) but rather as a means of enjoyment in the literal act of writing non-sense. We could read this excess of words, meaning and phrases that PKD consistently reworks as an attempt to organise or to order his sense of subjectivity through the act of writing which, in and of itself, serves as a support. In this sense the *Exegesis-as-Sinthome* comes to take on a fundamentally valuable role within his sense of being. By providing such a central role in organising his subjectivity, PKD explicitly recognizes the *Exegesis* as the means for his continued existence or as he boldly claims, “It is the very dynamism of my life” (2011, p.887). In fact, his writing at moments becomes synonymous with existence itself, something which he can’t do without. Further examples where PKD places such great importance on his Exegetic output are not hard to find, for instance:

I am unable to do *anything*, except what little I have put in my writing. And how much is that? What does that accomplish? But viewed as a source of comfort, solace and purpose to my life, it is for me, intrinsically, everything. I have nothing else that I care about (p.237).

Due to the absolute vital function that writing has for PKD in stabilising his sense of subjectivity, he repeatedly invests a huge amount of worth in it, which presumably also serves as the catalyst to the

unending need to continually produce this unwieldy text. It is the process of writing *itself* which is of prime importance to PKD as he persists in creatively refashioning his own symbolic life world and his sense of corporeality within it. His subjectivity, read via the *sinthome*, is effectively underwritten by the *Exegesis*.

However, PKD's writing over the course of the *Exegesis* does not only attest to the sense of importance it has for him personally but begins to take on a supposed value independent from the one writing it. Indeed, just as Joyce came to view his writing as the means to elevate his name and construct his sense of ego, so too for PKD does the *Exegesis* start to take on a role of almost divine importance thereby reinvesting him in social relations and bestowing on him a potentially grandiose sense of self. PKD, over the course of his writing, does not just view the *Exegesis* as a collection of his own particular reflections on the nature of theology or philosophy but he comes to afford it a central role in redeeming the Earth in its entirety. PKD positions his writing as having direct importance for others, in fact it's very worth at times seems to be for the purposes of humankind's salvation. Despite not being directly addressed to a particular recipient, PKD frames his writing as a conduit to another world, one that can possibly help him in his supposed time of need. Consider the following passages where he encapsulates this very sensibility:

Sudden total realisation as I was falling asleep (5:50 A.M). My writing isn't messages smuggled into this spurious world to tell us our situation. No – we are in a prison, and my writing is messages smuggled *out*! (2011, p.411).

"This "reporting back" use of my writing, back to those outside, stating conditions here and asking for help .... (ibid).

but now I am given to understand that actually my writing is a report on the situation here outgoing – meant to leave our irreal world, to break out, not in, and acquaint the actual world (macrobrain) of our plight. They are then appeals for help, by a salvific entity which has invaded this our irreal world, an entity we can't perceive (p.412).

PKD writes here of being imprisoned, of his dire situation in the current world which requires outside assistance for him and the rest of humanity alike. By ascribing such an important function to his *Exegesis* PKD was able, just like Joyce, to compensate for his otherwise fragile place within discourse.

Elevating his writing to such a degree helped secure an ego that was arguably under threat from the incoherence and fragmentation that accompanies 'psychotic' experience. But it is via a direct appeal to an Other that PKD attempts to achieve this. Viewed *sinthomatically*, PKD is attempting to refashion a social bond here between himself and the 'actual world' as he states. His writing is explicitly named as the means for achieving this. Via PKD's 'reporting back' he is attempting to describe his own subjective experience, one characterised by the many delusional sounding elements we have discussed. But by 'reporting back' to an Other, PKD's writing will potentially be able to save him and the world at large. We get a sense, following Lacan's thinking, that as PKD is documenting many of his strange experiences within the pages of the *Exegesis*, he is not only shoring up his own psyche by creating his delusional metaphor via text but he is also attempting to appeal to an Other. His writing is an attempt to 'smuggle out' the conditions of his apparent turmoil to an audience which in turn will assist in their, and his own, salvation. The writing in itself serves as a social bond. PKD is committing to script the bond he is attempting to instate with the world at large. We will return to the connective theme in PKD's writing later when we discuss the possible 'networked paradigm' inherent to the *Exegesis*. But for now, it is sufficient to recognise that a fundamental logic not immediately apparent on the surface of the *Exegesis*' many pages is one that accords to the notion of a resuscitated social bond that characterises Freud's analysis of Schreber's *Memoirs* and Lacan's theorisation of the *sinthome*. We have then various domains bound together in the context of PKD's writing; the Symbolic as evidenced through his own use of language and the Imaginary relating to discussions of his bodily metamorphosis. My argument is that, by submitting the *Exegesis* to a 'symptomatic/sinthomatic' reading, we can appreciate how the structure of 'psychosis' is at work at both at the level of the body and the signifier. The *Exegesis* is being conditioned by a dynamic that is outside of the text but is nevertheless identifiable within it through its effects.

Returning to the role of enjoyment in Lacan's seminar XXIII, the *sinthome* is linked to transformations in jouissance. Whereas earlier in Lacan's work jouissance was identified as a "deadly

excitation that overcomes the protective barriers set up by the pleasure principle, as a surplus or excess jouissance” (Moncayo, 2016, p.51), by the time of seminar XXIII different forms of jouissance apart from the ‘jouissance of the Other’ are formulated. Phallic jouissance (as well as feminine and mystic jouissance) are complimented in seminar XXIII by what Lacan refers to as *jouis-sense*, literally meaning ‘enjoy-meant’ in sense or meaning-making. It is this aspect of the Real that completes our understanding of the sinthomatic endeavour that is the *Exegesis*. What all of the domains covered here in our examination of PKD’s text deal with in one way, shape or form are the author’s attempt to compensate for the initial crisis in meaning that he undergoes in 3-74. Baffled by the initial experience of receiving information via his pink beam of light and the subsequent revelation of seeing his immediate reality stripped away to expose an ancient Rome of the past still in operation within his present, the *Exegesis* can be seen as his attempt to grapple with this new reality, and most importantly, ascribe some sense of meaning to it. From wild assertions based on speculative philosophy to a hotchpotch of monotheistic and eastern religions, PKD’s exegetic writing is nothing if not an attempt to establish some new found sense of meaning or understanding to his re-configured reality. And it is this intrusion of the Real, of jouissance, that he repeatedly attempts to re-fashion into some kind of meaning or sensible understanding. Jouissance reworked into meaning: *jouis-sense*. Consider the following passage:

At this point one could begin to take it, my writing, very seriously, since everything seems to coalesce into something of meaning. The sense of unreality fits in ... the disruption of the ontological categories ... the sacerdotal power buried for aeons (2011, p.89).

PKD is explicitly stating that the *Exegesis*, by tying all of its different elements together, is starting to coalesce into ‘something of meaning’. We noted above the ‘Yes, that’s it!’ passage which is nothing if not an attempt to arrive at meaning via a very convoluted, excessive writing practice. Much of the *Exegesis* is populated by instances or passages where PKD attempts to boil down a number of diffuse elements in order to grapple with a lack of understanding related to himself, his subjectivity or the universe at large. Quite often these attempts at binding are written in a list-like format, as if PKD is

simply wanting to produce on the page a string of ideas, experiences or points of reference in order to see how they may fit together to form some larger meaning or structure of understanding. The randomness to the things included in such lists lends a kind of manic quality to his thought process where ever more obscure references are piled up on top of one another in the hope of achieving a breakthrough or new valuable realisation. For example, early on in the *Exegesis'* construction, PKD writes:

- (1) I believed I was someone else.
- (2) From Another time period.
- (3) Dead centuries ago and reborn.
- (4) A holy Christian person.
- (5) I spoke Attic Greek somewhat and remembered Rome.
- (6) I wanted a new name and trimmed my beard.
- (7) All my interest and habits changed – instantly.
- (8) My linguistic idiosyncrasies altered permanently.
- (9) Even the way I margined my pages changed.
- (10) I wrote people id never written before.
- (11) I joined a religious organisation I'd never heard of.
- (12) All my political life alliances of a lifetime changed totally.
- (13) I called cats "she" and dogs "he".

Ergo: He who was alive died, and someone else now lives now in me, replacing me.

- (14) I talk to and am talked to by God.

Well, what more can you ask out of a transformed person? I know the future and things beyond my senses, but I'll skip that because I am not sure if that counts.

- (15) I stopped drinking wine and drank beer.
- (16) I knew that aerosol sprays were lethal; likewise cigarettes.
- (17) I could discern evil and could tell what was true.
- (18) My spelling is unchanged. (To give some continuity).
- (19) I recovered from most of my quasi-physical ailments.
- (20) Most of my time since I spend studying theology.
- (21) The level of my intelligence is increased – this includes reading retention, speed and, abstract thinking.
- (22) My depth perception is improved.
- (23) Mental operations which baffled me are now easy (i.e. mental blocks now seem gone).
- (24) My psychological projections are withdrawn. (p.192).

The structure of the passage evidences the pleasure PKD seems to take in writing, writing anything at all. From statements of quite a profound nature (I talk to God) to discussions of the very

mundane or ordinary (I trimmed my beard), the purpose for PKD is perhaps less what he is committing to script but the fact that he is committing to script anything in the first place. The value or importance of PKD's writing exercise is the act of writing itself, which, as we can see, is a vehicle for recording or exploring his thoughts on just about any subject matter whatsoever. Amongst all of this jumbled stream of consciousness is, I believe, an attempt by the author to search for something, or an effort to distil his reflections into one overarching system of meaning, one that crucially never arrives.

I have noted before the vast number of themes, events, ideas and concepts that PKD works and re-works into one overarching system. He incorporates ideas from religious and spiritual traditions, disparate elements of garage style philosophy, his own published works, as well as a whole host of civilisation-defining Ur-texts and notable literary sources into one spun out cosmology. PKD in essence is binding, or indeed knotting, all of these different elements into one single framework of meaning, one that is forever being re-fashioned and re-modelled. He finds he can order and tame the overwhelming experience via this meaning making enterprise that is his *Exegesis*. PKD quite literally finds and redirects his enjoyment into the meaning that he consistently derives from his writing. And as such, it comes to be felt as a conviction for him, it provides support and consistency to his life as without this literary writing-machine (his *aufschreibsystem*) he would be unable to order his life world. In 1979 PKD writes:

My writing is a deliberate attempt to take these conflicting or disintegrating realities, and the experiences of them, and seek some kind of ontological or metaphysical overview? So in a way I battled against schizophrenia by seeking a philosophical framework which will (1) accept as real these disruptive data; and (2) account for them. 2-3-74, then, can be viewed as the catalytic triumph or payoff – i.e. the success – of decades of observation and analysis and theorizing (p.516).

We can get perhaps no better indication that PKD, at some level, recognised that his mental turmoil (what he refers to as 'schizophrenia' here) was countered by his constant seeking of some grand overarching system of meaning or understanding. In this sense, he viewed the *Exegesis* as a 'catalytic triumph' and we are reminded here that many of his biographers have noted that the last years of

his life, the ones in which he was totally immersed in the *Exegesis*' construction, appear to have been some of the most stable of his life, certainly the most successful in terms of his professional and private endeavours (Sutin, 2006). We may also note that the *Exegesis* was an unending endeavour. By providing meaning and support to his existence it required continual production. An unceasing desire to write his subjectivity into being was brought to a halt only with the biological end to his life. There could never be a final reckoning for PKD, as the writing itself was the support he required to stave off the paranoia and fragmentation that engulfed him in (and perhaps prior to) 3-74.

### 6.6 *Exegesis* as 'Psychotic' Text?

"I personally achieved the catalytic metamorphosis that my writing promotes. And my writing may aid others in expanding their inner space – pointing toward what I did: breaking through....." (2011, p.532).

Metamorphosis, writing, language and an appeal to an Other - I have situated these themes, contained within PKD's quote above, in respect of 'psychotic' structure, one that mobilises a specifically Lacanian interpretation based on his tripartite system of the Symbolic, Imaginary and the Real. I have deliberately eschewed extended discussion on the overt surface level elements of the *Exegesis* that could suggest 'psychotic' thinking on the behalf of its author. UFO's and Alien beings, trans-dimensional consciousness, Marxist plots and the role of security services abound throughout the *Exegesis*'s pages. Instead of foregrounding these elements as evidence of PKD's supposed 'psychosis', I have chosen instead to delve into the submerged dynamics within the text itself which accord to a number of theories we have examined prior to this chapter. My reasoning for doing so is that by interpreting the *Exegesis* via the workings of a delusional metaphor, or the *Sinthomatic* role PKD's writing served, a case is made for aligning the *Exegesis* with 'psychotic' structure at the level of text. Although listing the many delusional sounding elements within the text may provide for interesting reading, it wouldn't tell us a great deal about how a possible 'psychotic' structure was operating within the *Exegesis*' construction. By tracing an interrelation between PKD's conception of

language, the role of his body and the manner by which his writing served as a social bond, I have drawn explicit similarity to our earlier psychoanalytic interpretations of another supposed mad text - that of Daniel Paul Schreber.

I am aware that this style of reading whereby many diffuse elements are coordinated into one overarching system of meaning (one that mirrors PKD's own exegetic focus) is a specific trait of the 'strong theory' that Sedgwick (2003) holds as being an attribute of paranoid reading, a reading indebted to a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' of which symptomatic practices are a part. Likewise, the attempt to uncover something hidden within the text (in this instance a 'psychotic' structure) speaks to the paranoid sensibility informing symptomatic practices. Sedgwick offers a reparative model to counter the worst excesses of critical reading. It is a model, that as Sedgwick herself notes, does not have to be mutually exclusive with that of symptomatic endeavours. In fact, her argument explicitly states that the richest reading practices are those that oscillate between paranoid and reparative analyses, between a focus on surface and depth or strong and weak theory. The case for the *Exegesis* being positioned as a specifically 'psychotic' text is strengthened by a reading that does just this; one that moves between the apparent odd, bizarre and outright 'mad' elements on the surface to one that concentrates its efforts on the hidden dynamics at play within language and the process of writing.

There is one large theme within the *Exegesis* suggestive of a 'psychotic' structure at work that we have not, however, yet covered. Just as Schreber became estranged from the world around him, so too did PKD assert that his immediate environment was in fact false and furthermore that this false layer of reality was directly concealing temporal processes running at odds with how we usually perceive time. By engaging in this one single theme within PKD's text, in the following chapter we shall bolster the case for a 'psychotic' structure at work within the *Exegesis* whilst also opening up the possibility that these mad elements can be read outside of a strictly clinical focus. PKD's concept of 'orthogonal time', as we shall see, accords not only to psychoanalytic theorising on



the nature of subjective temporality within 'psychotic' experience, but also to a set of discussions relating to what I am calling 'postmodern time'. As such, we shall start to appreciate how interpretations of 'mad writing' can straddle both clinical and cultural domains (much like the analyses of Schreber we encountered in Part 1), as well as understanding how the conceptual apparatus of 'psychosis' I am tracing through PKD's text lends itself to readings that suggest that the *Exegesis* may not be so crazy at all.



## Chapter 7: Dyschronia: From 'Psychosis' to Postmodernism via 'Orthogonal Time'

"I think it is at least empirically arguable that our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural language, are today dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time" - Fredric Jameson (1991, p.16).

"Parsifal: "Here time turns into space." Is this what I saw in 3-74? Time had either rolled back, or aside, or departed (a "dysfunction") and I saw augmented (i.e. enormously greater) space.... So if you left the mundane world and entered the sacred (lower realm to upper?) maybe this is what you'd notice: time (whatever that might be) turning into space – vast dimensions, as with the void which I experienced: pure, total space" - Philip K. Dick (2011, p.445).

Employing a symptomatic reading in our preceding chapter enabled us to establish the case for positioning the *Exegesis* as a 'psychotic' text. By building on this initial interpretation we shall now engage with one major theme within PKD's Sinthomatic endeavour: one that is concerned with time and changes in subjective temporality. In this sense, PKD's writing on time will bridge both clinical and cultural readings that can be made of the text, thereby, establishing 'psychotic' writing within a psychosocial framework, a framework that joins the subject to the larger socio-discursive terrain in which s/he resides. Our critical reading practice, symptomatic reading, which posits the related concepts of the 'problematic' and the 'epistemological break' will again be employed. My aim then is to demonstrate that the *Exegesis*' engagement with temporality not only conforms to various theoretical insights on the subjective or phenomenological experience of 'psychosis' but also moves beyond this and starts to bear an uncanny resemblance to a number of prominent theories about the altered nature of postmodern time; a specific set of traits that emerged towards the end of the twentieth century concerned with 'static', 'compressed' and 'timeless' time. PKD coined his own term for this - 'orthogonal' time.

Moreover, the interconnection between 'psychotic time' and what I am labelling 'postmodern time' comes full circle if we return to Jameson's original thesis on postmodernism from which the above quote is taken. Jameson (1991), utilising Lacanian theorisations of 'schizophrenia',

emphasised how postmodernism elicits a collapse of all temporal frames into an undifferentiated present; a series of endless 'nows' brought about due to a breakdown in synchronic movement. In this chapter, I engage directly with this connection - between contemporary experiences of time and the use of psychopathology to frame them - via the *Exegesis*. If PKD's writing does capture both the temporal markers of 'psychotic' functioning as well as the altered state of postmodern time, as I believe it does, then we can begin to appreciate how 'psychotic' writing, in this instance the *Exegesis*, can be harnessed to construct a specifically psychosocial critique. I will close by re-introducing the work of Gilles Deleuze and his concept of becoming, which is heavily indebted to his reflections on temporality. By doing so, I shall evidence how PKD's writing on a newly configured conceptualisation of time not only bridges this clinical/cultural divide, but also references the key mechanism by which PKD's text is able to channel specific socio-cultural traits, albeit in a refracted sense. PKD's writings on his temporal predicament implicitly reference a process of 'becoming', one which we shall later utilise to construct this thesis's final socio-cultural reading of the *Exegesis*.

## 7.2 Orthogonal Time

Orthogonal time, and PKD's related discussions on a distinct temporal disturbance or flux which brought about 3-74, comprises one of the *Exegesis*'s major themes. PKD expends much energy over its eight-year composition attempting to work and re-work this, at first, highly bizarre conception of time in order to account for what he experienced, and perhaps more importantly, why. Although not an easily understood (or perhaps even fully coherent) concept, orthogonal time is, for PKD, a separate temporal arrangement that runs counter to linear or cyclical time. It runs perpendicular or at right angles to normally experienced time and in this sense is a merging of all aspects of temporality into one unified state. Typically, attempts made by PKD to encapsulate what precisely this concept refers to dance between his own very private, very personal experiences of this subjective state and his larger impersonal theorisations or philosophical speculations based on a mix of eclectic sources. Early on in the *Exegesis*'s construction, PKD attempts to explain it as follows:

it is speculated now that besides the regular time there may be a hypertime which would be orthogonal, a word I didn't know; I looked it up and sure enough, it means 'at right angles'. Also, someone (Kurt Gödel, I think the Britannica article said) speculated that the orthogonal time might be curved, since time and space are regarded now as integral, and space does curve; this hypertime would curve back onto itself ... (2011, p.77).

Shortly after he expands on this to state:

Our comprehension (understanding) of time is faulty; there seem to be two distinct kinds of time, at 'right angles' to each other: horizontal time (as the form-regressions follow in *ubik*) and vertical, which we seem aware of alone. Hence, *cubic time*, or time seen in both axes simultaneously, like cubic space versus two-dimensional; i.e. Time moving in two directions (dimensions) at once. Events are arranged within this cubic "space" or rather time as objects are in cubic space (ibid. p.87).

The first quote has recourse to a particular theoretical authority in the guise of Kurt Gödel to flesh out the notion of orthogonal time. PKD's use of the signifier's 'hypertime' and 'curve' immediately calls to mind Einstein's (1916) theory of general relativity and his very own field equations, which speculated the existence of a curved form of space-time resulting from the interaction between matter and energy (gravitation). Indeed, PKD is correct to employ the proper name of 'Gödel' as a source for thinking through this reconfigured notion of time, as it was the Austrian mathematician and logician who is perhaps best associated with the possibility (theoretically at least) of travelling through time via his 'closed time-like curves' (1949). In the lineage of Parmenides, Kant and a host of modern idealists, Gödel inferred that there was no such thing as a specifically objective lapse of time and that temporal change is in fact an illusion arising from our subjective mode of perception. The 'Gödel metric' offering an answer to Einstein's field equations is the so-called 'cosmological solution' instigating a radical upending of cyclical or linear notions of time. Although not certain of his reference (denoted by the 'I think'!) PKD has correctly tied his own theory of up-ended time to the major thinker of reconfigured temporal arrangements. The 'epistemological break' that Einstein's general relativity and Gödel's 'causal loops' undoubtedly represent is inherently referenced in the *Exegesis*' concept of orthogonal time.

Jump forward a few paragraphs in PKD's writing and theoretical rigour is lost in favour of a notion of time at right angles to itself, a new-fangled idea of 'cubic time' alongside a reference to his own science fiction work *UBIK* (1969). Symptomatically speaking, this dance between an appeal to a credible, socially sanctioned intellectual source and a return to an eminently singular experience or privately produced work (Gödel versus *UBIK*) occurs consistently throughout the *Exegesis*. Orthogonal time is perhaps the very best example of this. PKD conflates this new 'problematic' in science (in the sense that Althusser speaks of) with, what appears often as, a completely idiosyncratic and singular appreciation of his very own reality. This dance or tension is undoubtedly a productive one. What marks PKD's discussion of orthogonal time is how these grand cosmological speculations of time (based either in terms of 'Einsteinian/Gödelian mathematics' or, as we shall note later, in more of a sociological postmodern vein) are quite literally elaborated in an embodied, hugely personal sense. It is as if PKD, through his exegetic writing, is internalising this epistemic break or radical cultural shift in our understanding of what time is and how we can perceive it. This internalisation is what marks the *Exegesis* as a particularly intriguing source for thinking through the social. PKD didn't just rethink what time is, he lived it.

In order to situate this internalisation of reconfigured temporal arrangements, I am going to return initially to the language and terminology of 'psychosis'. PKD's dislocation in time, his lived reality of orthogonal dynamics, strikes a chord with a number of clinical insights on the phenomenological experience of time in 'psychosis'. By examining various quotes, passages and entries within the *Exegesis* symptomatically, I aim to show the inherent similarity to the work of Eugene Minkowski and Jacques Lacan who provide a framework for understanding how subjective temporality is radically altered under the structure of 'psychotic' experience. However, this reveals to us only one aspect of the *Exegesis'* temporal concerns. Orthogonal time, and PKD's internalisation of alternations in usual chronological sequence, also marks out an emerging set of sociological or cultural insights beginning in or around a similar period to the *Exegesis'* construction. As such,

orthogonal time provides a bridge between clinical and cultural readings and, furthermore, suggests that the framework for understanding 'psychosis' may have relevance for situating particular cultural practices. We should, however, remain aware of this movement between PKD's inner private conception of such a temporal flux and the subsequent appeal to socially constituted knowledge to ground it. As we shall come to see, this dance between the two, read symptomatically, will reveal an important mechanism at the heart of the *Exegesis*' psychosocial logic.

### 7.3 Pathologies of Lived Time

Subjective experience of time in psychopathological states has a rich and varied history in philosophical, psychological and medical research. As one prominent contemporary writer in this area notes, "there is virtually no other field where the dialogue between psychiatry and philosophy has been so intensive and fruitful" (Fuchs, 2010, p.76). This intensive dialogue continues today (see Möller & Husby, 2000; Vogeley & Kupke, 2007; Leiviskä Deland, Karlsson & Fatouros-Bergman, 2011) and whilst often couched in the language of the DSM and quantitative research, with only a passing nod to the philosophical tradition in which it is steeped, the dialogue itself shows little sign of abating. The continued draw for phenomenological psychiatry within this domain is built on the recognition that temporality constitutes one of the absolute bedrocks for any perceived experience or awareness of one's own consciousness. The work of Henri Bergson (1889), Edmund Husserl (1991) and Martin Heidegger (1953) has provided the existential and philosophical framework for a range of thinkers to expand their studies on how time itself is interrupted, blocked or altered in a range of conditions from 'schizophrenia' through to 'melancholia' and many others besides. Straus (1960), Binswanger (1960), v. Gebsattel (1954) and Tellenbach (1980) represent some of the major names in this field.<sup>60</sup> However, any discussion on this relation between lived time and psychopathological

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<sup>60</sup> Although perhaps originating from a different angle, the contemporary mindfulness movement pays particular attention to time and in particular the time of the present. In this sense it is an attempt to root

states will forever be indebted to the work of Eugene Minkowski, in particular his 1927 study, *La schizophrénie: Psychopathologie des schizoïdes et des schizophréniques* as well as his more famous 1933, *Lived Time: Phenomenological and Psychological studies*. Minkowski was the first to elaborately detail the experience of time in what may now be termed ‘schizophrenic/psychotic’ states as well as more depressive type episodes. His work constitutes the undoubted foundation to this field and it is to this, and its relevance to the *Exegesis*, that I now turn.

Minkowski, whilst operating from within the traditions of German psychiatry (himself a student of Eugene Bleuler) and aspects of existentialism and psychoanalysis (an interlocutor with Ludwig Binswanger and Karl Gustav Jung) provides a rich phenomenological framework for situating and understanding aspects of psychopathology in relation to temporal concerns. Utilising the notion of *élan vital* and the concept of Duration (*durée*) drawn from Henri Bergson, Minkowski developed a theory of ‘schizophrenia’ which describes how the subjective state of the ‘psychotic’ is one characterised by a withdrawal of one’s very own ‘life-force’. He writes:

moreover, since the schizophrenic process, as we have seen, affects the vital dynamism itself, the perturbations of the phenomenon of lived time are particularly profound. Here time entirely breaks down, contrary to what takes place in other mental disorders, where a modification is produced in *the domain of time itself* (mental subduction in time) (1933, p.284).

One of ‘schizophrenia’s’ defining aspects, for Minkowski, is this complete collapse in temporal functioning as opposed to mere modifications in the domain of time which characterise other disorders. Time isn’t just altered in ‘schizophrenia’, it comes apart altogether. How though does this ‘breaking down of time’ present itself? Minkowski states that this new temporal arrangement for the ‘psychotic’ appears as a kind of ‘non-time’ or a time that is not lived in the here and now but rather removed or detached from the ‘psychotic’ subject. Furthermore, this dislodged time has a deadened quality to it with an emphasis on a stuck present or of a perpetual reliving of the past that

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experiences of mental health within temporal locations. Further interest in the temporal phenomenological perspectives on psychiatric experience can be found in the work of M. Ratcliffe (2014) *Experiences of Depression: A Study in Phenomenology* and Gareth Owen’s (2012) *The Maudsley Reader in Phenomenological Psychiatry*.



is forever intruding on the present moment. Minkowski, drawing on the contemporaneous writings of Franz Fischer, states that their collaborative work on 'schizophrenia' "emphasizes *a very profound dislocation of the phenomenon of time, with a prevalence of the past*, which, as we know, represents the most static aspect of lived time" (1933, p.284). Minkowski, in his work, draws on written patient testimony, or rather instances of 'psychotic' text, to highlight the apparent interruption of temporal processes under the condition of 'schizophrenia'. He includes the following examples:

I tried to envisage time as usual, but I could not do it; and then came a feeling of horrible expectation that I could be sucked up into the past or that the past would overcome me and flow over me. It was disquieting that someone could play with time like that, somewhat daemonic. This would be perverse for humanity (p.285).

It takes me backwards, but where? There where it comes from or where it was before. It goes back into the past. You have the feeling that you are going to fall behind. It is that which disappears, that which passes. Time slides into the past, the walls have tumbled down. Before, everything was solid. It is as if it is right at hand, as if you ought to draw it here again; is it time? It comes from far away! (p.286).

There is no more present, there is only a going-backwards; it is more than a feeling, it extends over everything. In the air of the room there are all sorts of schemes directed against me. But I do not pay any attention to them; I rest my mind so that it will not split apart (p.287).<sup>61</sup>

Close examination of these passages reveals a number of themes. Firstly, the reliving of the past, this 'going-backwards', is perceived as an involuntarily action. Minkowski's patients are either 'sucked' into the past or 'fall' into it. The shock of time sliding away reveals itself as a cataclysm akin to the tumbling down of walls which may result in the splitting apart of one's very mind. None of the patient descriptions here indicate any self-control or influence over this perceived turmoil, a turmoil that is experienced as more than just a simple feeling where the only option seemingly available is to submit to the pull of the past. The second thing we detect is the attribution of this action to a malevolent, or indeed, daemonic force. The paranoid or conspiratorial nature of this experience whereby schemes are directed against the unfortunate individual chimes with Schreber's (1903) own

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<sup>61</sup> These excerpts were originally published in: Fisher, Franz, (1929) "Zeitstruktur und Schizophrenie," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie*, CXXI & Fisher, Franz, (1930). "Raum-Zeit-Struktur und Denkstörung in der Schizophrenie," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie*, CXXIV.

testimony and undoubtedly countless other paranoid accounts of impending disaster. We may recall that for the paranoid subject, an overvaluation of the influence of the Other is a common trait. Minkowski's excerpts here are no different and represent another example of clinical theory being derived from the written work of 'psychotic' subjects.

Turning to the *Exegesis* now, we will note a range of similarities with Minkowski's work and the 'prevalence of the past' in 'psychotic' experience. Amongst the many reflections PKD commits to writing about his own subjective location within time, he offers, in 1977, the following summation:

What is my real relationship to time? I experience the near past, the near future, and the very far past; a lot of my soul or psyche seems to be transtemporal .... Maybe this is why any given present space time seems somehow unreal or delusional to me (2011, p.261).

For PKD, time has coalesced into one state, he experiences both the future and the past simultaneously, but interestingly it is a predominance of past experience of which he writes. Both the near past and the very far past intrude on his present moment. The result is that the present instance has an unreal quality to it - he does not have the expected investment in time as it appears at odds with him or in his own words 'delusional'. However, to really appreciate the possible delusional aspect to PKD's temporal locale, one that is in keeping with Minkowski's temporal perturbations in 'schizophrenia' and the discussed 'prevalence of the past', there is surely one major component to PKD's writing on his own lived experience of time that marks the *Exegesis* out from simple eccentricity in regards of subjectively experienced time or perhaps an overly poeticised account of one's place in the universe. I am referring here to the much discussed issue within the *Exegesis* of PKD's belief that during the events of 3-74 he experienced ancient Rome supplanted onto his present day home in Fullerton, California.

This quite extraordinary claim represents one of the more outlandish ideas within the entire *Exegesis* but one that he returns to time and again whilst incorporating it into other related

schemas.<sup>62</sup> The 'ancient Rome' theme is called on later in the *Exegesis* to describe a prison-like complex which encases the entire world. PKD further reasons that the Roman Empire, in fact, never came to an end but survived to the present day in a camouflaged state, for the purposes of enslaving humanity. The paranoid flavour to this is quite evident. The Rome theme also takes on a much larger religious significance with PKD identifying himself with the persecuted Christians of the time. It is difficult not to assign a delusional quality to statements such as the following:

I remember that when this first hit me, in the first couple of weeks, I was absolutely convinced that I was living in Rome, sometime after Christ appeared but before Christianity became legal (2012, p.33).

And, likewise, when writing about his 3-74 experience he states:

I looked around and saw *Rome! Rome everywhere!* Power and force, stone walls, iron bars (2012, p.59).

And in 3-74 I reached that absolute world; time and space peeled back – thousands swept out layers peeled away in a matter of hours, and there lay Rome and the disciples: The true hidden persecuted despised [early] church which Luther speaks of. As the Greeks knew, the truly real does not ever change or depart- it always *is* (2012, p.255).

Whatever 'hit' PKD in early 1974 was not just a mere feeling of the past, the 'sliding' or 'fall' from the present that Minkowski's excerpts highlight above. The walls have tumbled down to reveal that the historical past, the past of over 2000 years, remains entirely intact. The 'prevalence of the past' takes on a new intensity in PKD's vision and so too does the malevolent power that is orchestrating this new historical present. PKD's pre-occupation with a form of the Roman Empire still currently in operation is replete throughout the *Exegesis* and it is one of the first major issues that PKD tackles within its many pages. As early as November 1974 PKD writes that:

There is no doubt in my mind that my "vision" of my society was accurate in the sense that Mumford means it; I hadn't gone back in time, but in a sense Rome had come forward, by insidious and sly degrees, under new names, hidden by the flak talk and phony obscurations, at last into our world again (2011, p.59).

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<sup>62</sup> As an editor of the *Exegesis* states, "Dick was in many ways a genius and visionary, but this Rome business is just stone screwy [...]. Here it raises the obvious question: Did Dick really believe this? Or is he half-consciously assuming a guise of madness, not so much for the sake of the reader as for his own sake, so as to get – à la the most romantic nineteenth-century notions of madness – at some truth?" (2011, p.382).

PKD's experience of Rome is one characterised by 'insidious' and 'sly' intentions, of power and force as represented through prison-like architecture and the apparent illegality of the persecuted Christians of the time. The need to again add an air of intellectual authority to his claim is present in the use of the name 'Mumford', referring to the American historian, sociologist and philosopher of technology, Lewis Mumford (1967) who cited ancient Rome as an example of a large hierarchal organisation or 'megamachine'. These megamachines consisted of an amalgamation of economic, technical and political power in the service of complex technocratic projects at the expense of the repressed individual. PKD's experience of this repressive machine aligns with Minkowski's patients whose upheavals in time were attributable to an Other with malign intentions. For PKD the same holds, the Roman Empire, the historical embodiment of anti-Christian power, is still in operation only concealed behind a fictitious present day reality and it is through their own 'sly' and 'insidious' action that they have brought about this temporal realignment for PKD himself. We might speculate further that the persecuted Christian theme fits well with his own belief that his position, or indeed his writing, has a salvific function for mankind at large. What better example of an oppressive tyrannical Other, that is overcome by the redemptive powers of an enlightened individual, than the case of ancient Rome? The possibility that the *Exegesis* itself holds a similar function for PKD has been noted previously and we can argue that the 'Christian-Rome' theme here mirrors a grandiosity that is so often characteristic of 'psychotic' delusion.

The experience of Rome, however, encroaching on present day reality has not yet been described in terms of orthogonal time. It remains a private, internal construction without appeal to the possible temporal dynamics that Gödel for instance formulates. PKD certainly does incorporate the 'ancient Rome' theme into this schema but for the moment I wish to remain with PKD's own personal recounting of his distorted experience of time whilst returning to the work of Jacques Lacan, who provides another means for understanding how elements of the *Exegesis* accord to the logic of 'psychosis' that we have introduced via Minkowski and his phenomenological existential

underpinnings. The 'prevalence of the past', the 'stuck present' and the 'malevolent Other' introduced by Minkowski's withdrawal of one's life-force are be augmented by Lacan's contribution to the notion of 'psychotic' time.

#### 7.4 Lacan and 'Psychotic' Time

Minkowski's theoretical/philosophical framework is one indebted certainly to early existential thought and is complimented, at times, with a Jungian inspired psychoanalysis. Lacan was also greatly influenced by Heidegger's work and although his 'return to Freud' would likely mark him out from any Jungian lineage, there remains a degree of similarity regarding his theories on the phenomenology of 'psychotic' experience. These are similar but not identical. Whereas Minkowski's focus on the withdrawal of one's life force, the *élan vital*, and the corresponding 'prevalence of the past' is paramount to the 'psychotic's' lived time, Lacanian psychoanalysis leads us to understand that yes, time is altered but it is felt as a similar traumatic halt or deadening due to the logic of the signifier. To understand this, we must return to Lacan's structuralist inspired theory which posits the diachronic and synchronic movement of signifiers within the symbolic order. This is a movement that is arrested due to "sometime [when] there has been a hole, a rupture, a rent, a gap, with respect to external reality" (1955-56, p.45). Our analysis of Lacan's seminar on Schreber (1955-56) highlighted the much discussed mechanism at the heart of 'psychotic' subjectivity; the foreclosure of the name-of-the-father. This foreclosed element to the subject's psychic life ensures that what the 'psychotic' experiences is nothing less than a void brought about due to this rent or gap within the symbolic register. The result for the 'psychotic' is to experience this as an "enormous meaning that has the appearance of being nothing at all" (ibid. p.85). Lacan adds that in 'psychosis', "reality itself initially contains a hole that the world of fantasy will subsequently fill" (p.45).

The *Exegesis*, read via this Lacanian lens, is testament to the experience of this hole or gap which PKD sought to fill with phantasmatic notions of ancient Rome, amongst many others. The

Lacanian hypothesis here would be to suggest that this hole or gap is exactly what PKD was confronted with in '2-3-74'; a moment in his life-world that he could not place within the usual symbolic coordinates and which necessitated the need for fantasmatic elements to fill in for it. The result, as we have seen, is the eight-year writing exercise attempting to 'plug' this very hole. We will recall from the previous chapter how the *Exegesis* can be considered as one giant operation in meaning making, the jous-sens that he elicits and redirects through the never ceasing search for one single enormous understanding to his predicament (*PKD-the-Sinthome*). Ancient Rome, the intrusion of the past and orthogonal time all provide possible supports in this endeavour. This re-altered temporal logic also, however, provides another entry point in the Lacanian theory of 'psychosis'.

Lacan's analysis of Schreber's delusion, with the aid of Saussurean linguistics, helps to illustrate the dynamic that the symbolic accords to; one conditioned by the synchronic and diachronic movement amongst signifiers. In speaking of the mechanism of foreclosure (*verwerfung*) and the rejection of what he terms the primordial signifier (the name-of-the-father), Lacan highlights how the symbolic is constructed according to a temporal logic. He writes:

When he speaks, the subject has the entire material of language at his disposal, and this is where concrete discourse begins to be formed. Firstly, there is a synchronic whole, which is language as a simultaneous system of structured groups of opposition, then there is what occurs diachronically, over time, and which is discourse. One cannot but give discourse a certain direction in time, a direction that is defined in a linear manner (1955-56, p.54).

For discourse to be intelligible and for it to be brought into a dialectical relationship with the symbolic at large it must accord to this diachronic/synchronic logic. The passage of time is inherently at work within the use of discourse or language and, moreover, it essentially proceeds in a linear fashion. Without it, as Lacan then points out, we are left with an inert system of meaning. Once the subject is confronted with this tear in the symbolic, the usual passage from one signifier to another, the so-called 'metonymic sliding', is brought to a sudden halt. Diachronic movement is suspended and the experienced passage of time is, likewise, effected. The result is something akin to Minkowski's observations concerning a stuck or petrified experience of time for the 'psychotic'

subject. Lacan similarly highlights the alienating character that the world takes on, for Schreber for instance. In an almost identical vein, PKD harnesses this experience of entropy when he asserts boldly that, "Time is ending, literally" (2011, p.399) or when he claims, "I see at once. Growth is absolutely halted. *Time itself is stopped*" (ibid. p.414). The linear movement of time has for PKD, here, and in numerous other instances throughout the *Exegesis*, quite literally been suspended.

The suspension of linear time leads us to another related aspect that is present in both Schreber's and PKD's discourse - the pre-occupation with mortality and the belief in the world's impending demise. The work of M. Denischik (2015) may assist us here especially. Denischik, whilst operating within a Lacanian framework, has brought attention to the resultant experience of alienation and ultimately of death in response to the halting of time in 'psychosis'. Although her focus is primarily on the broken play of presence and absence within a 'psychotic' subject's psychic life, as opposed to the arrest of diachronic movement, she is able to reason that the 'psychotic's concern for impending disaster and their own fragile mortality is directly related to the suspension of linear time. She writes:

the dynamism of the world-organizing play of presence and absence ceases in psychosis, leaving the delusional subject hostage to the staticity of petrified, attenuated time. The time of psychosis is not grounded in the apparent presence of the world but hovers over the abyssal void of non-existence (p.159).

Presence and absence, which condition the passage of time and, therefore, one of the fundamental bedrocks of human experience, is dramatically upended due to the much discussed gap within the symbolic order. This abyssal void results, for Denischik, in the destruction of both the world and one's ego due to the complete lack of temporal markers which would normally be called on to situate one's biological development, the very passage of subjective life, as well as the historical movement of the world at large. Again, in respect of Schreber, she writes:

the continuous sense of belonging to the world dissipates along with the elements that constitute this relation, the person enters a state of alienation. A sense of the world's otherness reaches its apex, for Schreber, when the world must cease to exist for him to go on. Either Schreber or the world must become radically other,

that is, non-existent. It is my claim that the temporal function of psychic processes is so thoroughly dislodged in cases like Schreber's that a sense of non-existence, of being outside of time, a feeling of utter alienation manifests as a wish for the annihilation of the world and all relations with it (2015, p.157).

The absence of time manifests itself as a termination of one's mortality and relations with the world. Schreber's discourse, effected by this diachronic emergency, repeatedly references his belief that he is already dead or dying. PKD's exegetic focus mirrors Schreber in this very regard. On multiple occasions PKD questions whether he may in fact be dead, living in an afterlife or an alternate universe as a possible explanation for this experience of time's end. Take for instance:

So I may be dead, as of 3-74. My cosmological concepts are so terrific, so advanced as to be off the scale. I create whole religions and philosophical systems. The very fact that I honestly ponder if I may be dead and in heaven is prima facie of how happy I am (2011, p.512).

My experiences in '2-3-74' were like those in *Ubik* [...] Therefore I am dead (ibid. p.549).

I had, as in 1974, come to the end in some real and perhaps even ontological sense; mentally I had in fact died (p.712).

We will note that these quotes appear midway in the *Exegesis*' construction where PKD begins to theorise in full a new conception of life and vitality, one that he locates in the abstract notion of information. I will shortly make the correlation between his bodily metamorphosis (discussed in the last chapter), his own mortality and the emergence of a new disembodied form of subjectivity. What is of importance right now is this awareness of PKD's experience of death (or mental death) and the temporal disturbance that underwrites it. All of this I shall come to situate in respect of PKD's process of 'becoming'. For the moment, I can conclude that these themes inherent to the *Exegesis* concerned with ancient Rome, the suspension of time, the prevalence of the past and PKD's own morality are, at least in part, explainable via theories of 'psychosis' that stress its altered phenomenological characteristics. Minkowski's discussions on the withdrawal of one's life-force in 'schizophrenia' has provided some surface level similarities to PKD's assertions about the suspension of time and the encroachment of a historical past into his present moment. By incorporating Lacanian theory into the mix, we can appreciate to a more nuanced degree, and one



that has a focus for concealed dynamics (at the level of signifiers as well as metonymic sliding and associated diachronic/synchronic movement) how the statements, comments and written discourse of PKD can be interpreted via the structure of 'psychosis' interwoven throughout the *Exegesis*.

I mentioned earlier that PKD's dance between socially sanctioned sources of intellectual/theoretical rigour and his own spun out theories about time and the nature of reality is a common trait within his exegetic production. Gödel and Mumford are two such examples we have encountered so far. Philosophers of time, in the guise of Alfred Whitehead and Gottfried Leibniz, also hold prominent places within the *Exegesis*' many pages. The need for PKD to situate his own private experiences against these eminent figures of knowledge and thought, I believe, strikes of his deep felt desire to make his eccentric, if not outwardly delusional, sounding ideas accessible or intelligible to others. In this sense, it is an attempt to align his thoughts with an authority that will add a degree of credibility to his writing and his own theorisations about the nature of reality. This appeal to an Other is yet one more possible way we can understand his writing as a form of social bond. He binds his radical, outlandish claims with the proper names of philosophy and mathematics in an attempt to make his notion of orthogonal time accessible in a wider cultural sense. In doing so, PKD perhaps consciously is referencing a shift or break in theoretical understandings about the nature or composition of time, a shift or break that he himself underwent. PKD's orthogonal time chimes with this new 'problematic of science' instated by 'Gödel's metric' and his associated 'closed time-like curves'. However, orthogonal time, perhaps unbeknown to PKD's (conscious) self, also refracts one of the defining features of late modernity. In his frantic, and we might say delusional, theorising about the nature of orthogonal time as a means to explain his own very private experience, PKD unwittingly channels widespread alterations in collective experiences of temporality which are largely the result of rapid transformations in technological advancement. By delving deeper into PKD's theorisation of orthogonal time now, and

away from his pre-occupation with ancient Rome, I want to shift from a clinical lens and appreciate how the *Exegesis* can be read culturally; in this instance by aligning orthogonal time with a possible 'ontological break' that occurred towards the end of the twentieth century in respect of how time is felt on a global level.

## 7.5 Postmodern Time

One year after his '2-3-74' vision of ancient Rome that he used as the springboard to conceptualise orthogonal time, PKD writes, in respect of various 'signs' or 'non-living objects' that each of us encounter as we move through our reality and, thereby measure the passage of time, that:

There is really nothing in them but minimal – economic- transfer of information that one particular *now* has replaced the *now* (or prior signal) before it. We advance from signal to signal. The signals are unmoving, totally inert. We are driven inexorably; none of us can halt himself in that motion from signal to signal, since each one of the signals carries with it transfer-information to last until the next: each hands us over, as it were, when its "now" has expired (2011, p.123).

The passage of time is described in terms of signals transferring information over to other signals. The quote immediately calls to mind a technologically inflected, perhaps even digitally realised, framework for understanding how we experience time; a passage only perceived due to the information that one particular 'now' possesses before it expires in favour of another signal or carrier of information. For PKD, the transfer of information (from signal to signal) holds the key to understanding the experience of time passing. With the word 'internet' coined just a year before and with the emergence of home-based computer technology just around the corner, PKD's concern for information transfer (which will come to drive us inexorably) couldn't, historically speaking, be more apt. Moreover, his alignment of time with the transmission of information immediately references what I am terming an 'ontological break' in how time has been experienced due to the emergence of digitalised communication, computerised informational processes and the general

shift towards late capitalist production.<sup>63</sup> PKD's theorization of orthogonal time, and most importantly his lived familiarity of it, I ascertain, references these very developments. Frederic Jameson's (1991) thesis on postmodernism, and the attendant quote that opened this chapter, argues for the radical reconfiguration, if not outright obliteration, of time in favour of space. Lacan's thoughts on 'schizophrenic' functioning is employed to explain that associated collapse in synchronic movement thereby opening up, if only on a metaphorical level, the apparent similarity between postmodern time and 'psychotic' structure. Jameson is far from alone in his theorizations on the altered nature of postmodernism and the use of psychopathology to frame it (see Baudrillard, 1987). Before unearthing those passages or sections of the *Exegesis* that strike a major cord with Jameson's thesis, I want to plot a course through some of the major intellectual sources that have contributed to a modality of time that is characterised by inertia and conversely speed due to the changes in communicative and information technology; the sources that map out the ontological break that is postmodern time.

In keeping with Jameson's assertion that our subjective appreciation of space and time has radically altered, David Harvey (1989) argued in the late 80's that one key feature of our so-called postmodern age is a form of "time-space compression". Harvey reasons that this compression has come about due to "processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves" (p.240). Harvey asserts that we can best understand these changes in conceptions of space and time through the altered modes in global production/consumption processes. He links these changes to the changes wrought by the transition from static, highly mechanised and exceedingly regimented manufacturing processes to ones replaced by increased degrees of flexibility and individual tailoring; essentially, from rigid Fordist forms of industrial production to fluid, dispersed and fragmented organisational forms. The role of information technology and networked digital practices are central,

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<sup>63</sup> For a more detailed examination of how this experience of time is felt, and crucially how one's experience of labour necessarily effects ones temporal standing see S. Sharma (2014) *In the Meantime: Temporality and Global Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

for Harvey, to this change. Such computer based systems of communication have enabled a rapid rise and increased speed of information flow across the globe, resulting in streamlined modes of distribution and the enlarged transfer and consumption of commodities. Likewise, Harvey draws attention to the rise in electronic banking and the computerization of financial markets as being a key feature of this changing global experience. The global flow of capital is, for Harvey, at the heart of this experience of both space and time contracting.

Harvey's ideas find some degree of commensurability with those of social theorist, Manuel Castells (1996), in particular his notion of the 'network society'. Castells asserts that nearly three millennia after the invention of the alphabet, a new technological transformation in respect of our communicative ability is radically transforming our experience of socially shared reality. He coins this transformation 'real virtuality' and he writes:

The potential integration of text, images, and sounds in the same system, interacting from multiple points, in chosen time (real or delayed) along a global network, in conditions of open and affordable access, does fundamentally change the character of communication [...] because culture is mediated and enacted through communication, cultures themselves, that is our historically produced systems of beliefs and codes, become fundamentally transformed, and will be more so over time, by this new technological system (1996, p.328).

The term 'real virtuality' is adopted to address this drastic change in culture. The two central categories that are transformed by this immersion into a virtual setting are once again space and time. His basic assertion is that time was, until relatively recently, constricted by space. Only actors or subjects who shared a similar space could operate in real time. Time and space were, for all intents and purposes, coextensive. However, just as space became subject to new societal dynamics, so too time and our experience of it drastically changed during the latter half of the twentieth century. The introduction of communicative technologies, that Harvey draws attention to, allows for subjects to operate with others in real time whilst remaining in vastly different geographical and spatial locations. This, in turn, instigates a completely new temporal-spatial arrangement. Effectively, a new space-time is created allowing actors to share different spaces but the same time.

Castells names this the 'space of flows'. In developing this idea, Castells finds some theoretical alliance with a range of social theorists who have, likewise, commented on the effects modern life has on shared experiences of space and time. Anthony Giddens (1984) has theorised a so-called 'time-space distancing' (the stretching of social ties across space and time) as being one of the hallmarks of modernity. Paul Virilio (1995) has also taken this notion one step further and argued that following the introduction of networked digital communication, space is being annihilated, leading to a "dictatorship of speed" across all social, economic and political arenas.

Castells' difference from such theorists is found with his assertion that space has not disappeared but rather altered into a 'logic of flows', a new material basis for time sharing on which dominant social processes are reorganised. Essentially, the ability to act and communicate across different physical spaces results not, as one commentator on Castells notes, in the "linear shrinking of distance, but the establishment of an environment with a completely different, nonlinear spatial logic" (Stalder, 2006, p.147). This 'space of flows' engenders a binary spatial logic whereby distance is only understood in terms of presence or absence, no distance and infinite distance. Stalder goes on to state that "it is this condition that allows nodes to flexibly connect within one another, no matter where they are located, because they are all "here" in the same time sharing environment that is the space of flows" (ibid. p.153). The effects of communicative technology are also analysed by Castells in respect of time. He reasons that, contrary to previous conceptualisations of time as being cyclical and linear, the time of flows results in a disturbance in the sequential order of phenomena. For Castells, we no longer live with a dominant form of temporality whether that be biological time or clock time. The emergence of digital practices and networked interaction has given rise to multiple temporal experiences which creates a degree of chaotic fluctuation in the ordering of sequential events. For Castells, this results in a 'timeless time', a mode of temporality that is characterised by the absence of a fixed sequence itself. Now consider the following passage from

the *Exegesis* where PKD asserts that his own unique temporal arrangement is conditioning a state of disorder in linear sequence:

The re-emergence of cyclic time would be the method of restoration. It is not logically evident that hyper or orthogonal time {OT} would of necessity be cyclic; at first I thought it was retrograde. However, it does differ from lineal time in that lineal time is only unidirectional (by definition). OT is two-way or many omnidirectional (2011, p.118).

We can perhaps now begin to appreciate what the relevance of Harvey's, Castells' and other similar theorists' ideas about the changing nature of contemporary space and time has to do with PKD's orthogonal time.<sup>64</sup> Essentially, just as PKD's ideas about orthogonal time and the end of temporality are reminiscent of 'psychotic' phenomena, so too could it be argued that they touch upon this set of ideas related to a space of flows and timeless time. Both describe a domain where the usual passage of forward moving time (linear or cyclical) has been upended in favour of something altogether more complex. A version of time that contains numerous different movements and dynamics, a space of flows that PKD names as 'omnidirectional'. These movements of time branch off into multiple different directions and, as such, they come to exist in all possible spaces or arrangements (an ever present 'now') as in an omniscient or omnipresent space-time. In regards a compression of space and time, that is a supposed hallmark of Harvey's postmodern experience, we can get no clearer indication from PKD that his 3-74 experience channelled such a similar notion when he writes:

Time both expanded (I recalled 1,000's of years) but those 1,000's of years shrank down into an *immediate* sequence, as if very short. The telescoping of literally millennia disclosed a *single* underlying event – although spread out – *seemingly* elongated – in linear time, this collapsed view was the correct one. This was not just another way of seeing reality; it was the *accurate* way (2011, p.297).

PKD's new reality is one characterised by a single unified time. One that has been compressed or flattened out into one immediate sequence, a state containing all time frames together in one ever-present moment. What we find, though, is that this unified time comes eventually to be experienced

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<sup>64</sup> As Erik Davis (2019) draws attention to at the end of *High Weirdness*, Manuel Castells himself states, "Only in the 1970's did new information technologies diffuse widely, accelerating their synergistic development and converging into a new paradigm" (2010, p.39). The point being that 3-74 happens precisely at the same moment that this new paradigm came into being.

as no time at all. Without the sequential rhythm of time, which Lacan and Denischik write of above, time ceases to have any relevance and is experienced as abstract, detached or alien. PKD later describes how the experience of inhabiting all time frames simultaneously, of living through this compression of time into one 'immediate sequence', ultimately leads to him removing himself from any orientation in time whatsoever. PKD writes much later into the *Exegesis*' construction towards the end of 1979, that following his '2-3-74' experience:

The situation was a desperate one; I was consuming time faster and faster, which bears out my recent insight that I had been speeding up in relation to real time until finally I used up *all* time totally and passed outside of time! (2011, p.556).

PKD seems to be living within a domain whereby he is subject to massively increased temporal pressures, a so-called 'dictatorship of speed'. There is a sense that the movement of time is increasing to such a degree that it results in the eradication of temporality altogether, an eradication that, as we have noted, is a supposed trait of postmodern experience.

We have, then, two different lenses to try and situate orthogonal time and PKD's writing on temporality; one clinical, the other related to a general condition of late modernity. Whilst the outright delusional sounding elements to PKD's ancient Rome theme are hard to ignore, his personalisation of a shift in how reality itself is collectively experienced in a temporal sense is intriguing. The upending of time brought about by developments in mathematical theory in the early twentieth century is something PKD seems at least partially aware of and this new problematic is intentionally brought to the fore in his attempts to understand 3-74 whilst also grounding his experience in social terrain. At this level, we may postulate that PKD is binding his experiences to socially shared knowledge and his mad writing overlaps with this epistemological break. However, it is not just Einstein and Gödel who theorise a break in sequential or linear time. Those postmodern theorists, noted above, similarly arrive at a theory of time that no longer accords to linear movement. The difference separating both is that the first set of theoretical insights are entirely constructed within the field of 'hard' knowledge, within mathematical equation or scientific

calculation, while the latter is supposedly based within collective sociological experience due to cultural shifts in technological change. The epistemological break of Einstein/Gödel is mirrored to some degree on an ontological level with Harvey, Castells and other social theorists. Technological development appears, in their eyes, to have altered reality itself on a deeply subjective level. PKD explicitly references the break in epistemology but it is this implicitly referenced 'ontological break' that is perhaps more telling. As PKD moves from his own private break with reality (ontic) to socially shared knowledge (epistemic) he is simultaneously channelling, albeit unknowingly, a cultural shift in ontological understandings on the nature of postmodern time. This complex dance between private reality and the ontic/epistemic field with which to ground it, is one of the key mechanisms to understanding quite how the reconfigured social bond in 'psychosis' can produce wider cultural insights. Before we unpack this tight relation further over the remainder of this thesis, there is one last concept to throw into the mix that will further illustrate how the *Exegesis*, and we may add mad writing, can evidence changes in the field of psychosocial subjectivity and, therefore, provide a possible socio-cultural reading. This is a subjectivity that, according to Gilles, Deleuze is constituted within specific temporal logics.

## 7.6 Temporal Becoming & Psychopathology

The concept that I'm a time traveller from 70 A.D. completely explains Thomas. The PKD personality is a memory-less mask, and Thomas is the authentic personality of the time-traveller, and hence Thomas is really myself – the *actual* me who was sent here: like a cuckoo's egg. I am not PKD; I am Thomas – there was no theolepsy; only anamnesis (Dick, 2011, p.299).

The cuckoo's egg of which PKD writes, hatches to reveal a newly emergent, authentic persona to that which has gone before. For PKD, this new character (Thomas) is both a historical figure from the Christian Roman era, as well as the identity he will inhabit in the future. It is the aspect of PKD that can travel through time, the aspect that he was and perhaps, more importantly, will come to be. We saw in our previous chapter how change felt at the level of the body and an associated subjective metamorphosis is a key trait of 'psychosis', one that PKD writes of throughout



his *Exegesis*. Here his metamorphosis takes on a temporal concern and this change into someone or *something* else existing at differing levels of time cannot but lead us to a discussion on Gilles Deleuze's wide ranging concept of 'becoming'.

Extending through his collaborative *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972/1980) project with Felix Guattari and his own *Logic Of Sense* (1969), the concept of 'becoming' is one central to Deleuze's philosophical apparatus dealing with the 'actual/virtual', the 'three syntheses' as well as the roles of difference and repetition in the make-up of (larval) subjects. Deleuze, over the course of his theoretical output, was invested in constructing a 'system of becoming' that was not beholden to the 'four shackles of representational thought'. As one key Deleuzian scholar notes, these consisted of 'identity', 'analogy', 'opposition' and lastly, 'resemblance' (Bankston, 2017). These shackles are associated, for Deleuze, with a strictly temporal error that underwrites them, an error that posits change in terms of mechanistic causality alone. In order to rectify this error, and the temporal framework that holds representational thought together, Deleuze has recourse to two philosophers who provide the foundation for a critique of chronological time: Friedrich Nietzsche, whose 'Death of God' brought metaphysics to a halt and essentially overturned a hierarchal transcendental ordering of concepts (Being, Truth, Reason) in favour of immanent processes, and Henri Bergson, whose notion of 'virtual memory', likewise, posits a form of empty time which is at odds with the temporal underpinnings of representation. Nietzsche's eternal return (as well as the *ritonello*) and Bergson's concept of duration are the primary philosophical locations that Deleuze appropriates into his concept of 'becoming'. This dynamic, for Deleuze, is at work within and across concepts and ultimately provides for an understanding of how change is evoked within bodies and objects, whilst essentially detailing the way in which virtual elements are actualised through creative processes. Becoming is the work of difference, or indeed the virtual, within the actual. To appreciate this, we must employ different modalities of time outside of the usual mechanistic linear modalities in which it is so often conceived. Identity, which is founded on linear time, is completely undone by Deleuze's

‘process of becoming’; a creative refashioning or change which is inherent to all objects comprising the real.

Although PKD’s orthogonal time may not have the intellectual or philosophical rigour inherent to Nietzsche’s and Bergson’s work, it is attempting something similar; a reworking of linear temporality in favour of an altogether altered form of subjective time. Orthogonal time potentially provides a space for this very process of becoming due to its non-linear chronological logic. Orthogonal time, just as with duration and the eternal return, disrupts the foundation on which representational (and we might add static) forms of thought operate from. PKD gets uncannily close to Nietzsche when he reflects on his own concept:

if orthogonal time is circular then there is no regression along its axis in a linear sense; it would be a perpetual return, always a return; the direction of movement is one of depth not length (2011, p.80).

The point being that for something new to emerge, for difference to break into the domain of actuality, then we must approach time from a wholly different perspective, such as the Nietzschean inspired ‘perpetual return’ that PKD writes of. It is perhaps no surprise then that one of the fields ploughed by Deleuze (and Guattari) to illustrate processes of becoming is that of psychopathology which, as we have seen, so often entails altered forms of temporality. Taking its place alongside poeticism and artistic production, psychopathology for Deleuze demonstrates the creative and affective turn that ‘becoming’ essentially references. Following comments in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) we may situate Schreber’s dramatic shift in subjectivity for example with a process of ‘becoming-woman’ or ‘becoming-machine’.<sup>65</sup>

Lisa Blackman (2012), in her work on disembodied subjectivity, has similarly correlated Deleuze’s work on ‘becoming’ in psychopathology with the ‘creative breakdown’ inherent to outsider art. Taking its place alongside Deleuze’s own focus on Antonin Artaud for example,

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<sup>65</sup> Deleuze’s concept of ‘becoming–woman’ has received its fair share of feminist critique. For further discussion see R. Braidotti (2003) “Becoming-Woman: Or Sexual Difference Revisited” In *Theory, Culture and Society*. Vol.20: no.3, p. 43-64.

Blackman draws attention to a range of outsider artists (as well as more established figures such as Virginia Woolf and F. Scott Fitzgerald) who, through their creative output and channelling of their 'madness', were able to free themselves to some degree from the confines of social life and move beyond various imposed limits. Although Blackman rightly identifies how this process of creative 'becoming' has at times been overly romanticised in favour of the 'schizophrenics' 'poetic fire' or 'profound sensitivity', what is of importance is the recognition that these so-called 'psychotic' states are able to potentially provide spaces for creative and affective practices (becoming's) that allow for the emergence of different subjective and cultural states. For Deleuze, 'schizophrenia' is an example *par excellence* of 'becoming', of a newly emergent deterritorialised subjectivity fashioned together from different assemblages. Underwriting all of this is a non-linear modality of temporality that effectively reconfigures the foundation on which representation is based. My argument here is that PKD's orthogonal time provided him the means to 'become' something other than himself and create a space, realised via his writing, to reconfigure his subjectivity in a radical fashion.

Time, 'psychosis' and metamorphosis are all fundamentally intertwined with Deleuze's practice of 'becoming'. We will immediately recognize that a creative re-fashioning of one's self and sense of subjectivity via artistic process brings to mind the Lacanian notion of the *Sinthome*. This correlation between Lacan's mechanism for the binding of subjectivity and Deleuze's mechanism for the reworking of representation will follow our discussion into the next chapter and the final analysis of the *Exegesis*. Both the 'concept of becoming' and the *Sinthome* are conceptual tools with which we can interpret PKD's mad text and form a dualism that will assist in establishing the means by which the clinic can be conjoined to culture. The beginnings of the socio-cultural reading established here will also be reinserted into my final analysis that associates PKD's newly emergent subjectivity with a process of 'becoming-information'. The ontological shift in postmodern time, predicated on networked information and digitised communication, feeds into PKD's re-fashioned subjectivity that pre-occupies him towards the later stages of the *Exegesis*' construction. What ties all of my analyses

together, and ultimately demonstrates how written madness can be read at the level of clinic and culture simultaneously, is PKD's process of change, metamorphosis or 'becoming' that on one level references individual subjective 'psychotic' states whilst simultaneously existing on a continuum that evidences change on a socio-cultural level. PKD's oscillation between the altered aspect of time in 'psychosis' and the ontological break of postmodern time (both of which comprise the material for his own orthogonal time) essentially allows for my final reading centred on PKD's concern for his own disembodied subjectivity, process of 'becoming-information' and an implicit appeal to the figure of the post-human.



## Chapter 8: PKD's Body of Writing

“Indeed, it seems clear enough that when you have nothing left but your temporal present, it follows that you also have nothing left but your own body. The reduction to the present can thus also be formulated in terms of a reduction to the body as a present of time” (Fredric Jameson, 2003, p.712).

One of Jameson's key assertions in his widely celebrated analysis of postmodernism is that time has been completely altered under the logic of late capitalist society. In fact, for Jameson, time has taken on a fundamental affinity with the structure of 'schizophrenia' due to a breakdown in the synchronic/diachronic movement amongst signifiers. What remains is a stuck or petrified present. An endless now, devoid of usual linear movement or the passage of historical time. We noted above that many other theorists within the postmodern cannon have similarly emphasised the compressed, static and essentially timeless quality of collective experiences of temporality (Harvey, 1989; Virilio, 1995; Castels, 1996), much of this owing to the rapid advance in communicative and digital technologies. For PKD, as we saw over our previous chapter, orthogonal time conditions a similar temporal state; one resulting in an absence of successive movement through distinct temporal phases (past/present/future) in favour of an ever present series of 'nows'; a collapse of temporality altogether. When Jameson (2003) came to reassess his initial claims about our so-called postmodern condition, particularly those that relate to this absence of time, his conclusion, noted above, is that this obliteration of time ultimately leads back to the body as the last remaining site of one's experience of self.

In this final chapter analysing PKD's *Exegesis* I want to reintroduce the body, and PKD's written comments pertaining to embodiment, in order to demonstrate that our earlier focus on bodily metamorphosis not only accords to psychoanalytically informed insights in respect of 'psychotic' phenomena, but that PKD's concern for his corporeal existence also harnesses a set of discursive themes related to information theory and cybernetics. These coalesce into the figure of the posthuman and radically different emergent forms of subjectivity towards the end of the

twentieth century. In keeping with Jameson's claim, I argue that it is PKD's altered relation to temporality that propels his sense of embodiment to the forefront of his writing and, likewise, this altered experience of time provides the essential means for his sense of bodily subjectivity to undergo dramatic change. We closed our last chapter by referencing the Deleuzian notion of 'becoming' - a dynamic state of internal self-differing conditioning new creative potentials, energies and forms of identity. For Deleuze, alternative forms of temporality provide the internal logic required for such a process of 'becoming' and I ascertain that PKD's orthogonal existence essentially enables his body to become something other. What such a body may 'become' is the focus of this chapter and will provide the arena in which a broader cultural interpretation of the *Exegesis* can be constructed. In this sense, our analyses of PKD's writing come full circle. We began with the experience of bodily metamorphosis in respect of 'psychosis'. Now we shall see that PKD's metamorphosis directly taps into emergent technologies and developments within mathematics, thereby demonstrating how his outlandish claims essentially mirror much wider cultural preoccupations about the seat of subjectivity in a rapidly changing digitalised world.

I have targeted my reading on passages and quotes within the *Exegesis* that deal with PKD's discussion of bodies or sense of embodiment. What has become apparent is that discussion about his own body (as well as the concept of a collective body) is often mentioned alongside his evolving notion of information. Herein lies the pattern that exists at the text's surface, an 'information-embodiment' correlation that I ascertain finds a direct parallel in developments in mathematical/cybernetic theory in or around the same historical period as the *Exegesis*' construction. I add that the insights unveiled here by my analysis not only suggest that PKD's text is especially in tune with the techno-scientific theory of the time, but that it also offers something new in the guise of PKD's process of 'becoming-information' and a renewed form of vitalism in respect of changing structures of subjectivity in late capitalist society. To begin, however, I want to focus my reparative surface level analysis on the concept of the network; the reason being that from the very

beginning of the *Exegesis*' construction PKD associates the role of information in respect of networks and it is the model of the network that repeatedly resurfaces across the text.

## **8.2 Networked Text/ Networked Bodies**

Perhaps the first thing that we can note in respect of a networked paradigm within and across the *Exegesis* is that the text itself accords in many respects to a networked model of textual cohesion. By this I mean that the very structure of *Exegesis* adheres to a framework whereby differing elements, cords or threads intersect at regular intervals; or, as the sociologist Manuel Castells (1996) defines a network, a series of points or nodes that are interconnected by different communication pathways. We get a sense in PKD's exegetic writing that any number of the many diffuse elements taking up his interest may be reintroduced at any given time over the text's eight-year composition. Themes, concepts and ideas formulated in, say, early 1975, reappear in a modified form interacting with ideas brought to the fore in the mid 1980's. This constant criss-crossing between ideas (VALIS, orthogonal time, information, '2-3-74', God) ensures that the *Exegesis* never achieves a final summation or theoretical conclusion. There is no beginning, middle or end, no logical progression of thought or systematised developmental trajectory of ideas; rather a constellation of terms, words, signifiers and concepts all interrelating with each other without, it seems, any underlying logic aside from the notion that together they comprise something greater than the sum of their parts. The longer the *Exegesis* exists, the wider the net is cast. In fact, one may enter into the *Exegesis* on almost any page and find PKD incorporating differing elements from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, various Religious books, *the i-ching* and Gnostic tracts to provide the material for ever new theoretical insights on the nature of the universe and the inexplicable events of early 1974. The *Exegesis*, in a sense, comes to exist in a networked relation to these other civilisation defining Ur-Texts, and PKD presents it as a body of writing interacting with these famous books in order to synthesize their insights and profound 'truths'.



Moreover, the *Exegesis* also feeds off itself to produce further pages of script. Ideas that first start life as rather vague speculative notions are soon drawn upon to explain yet further intellectual flights of fancy. Like the ouroboros serpent consuming its own tail, the *Exegesis* subsumes elements within it to sustain its ongoing creation. In this sense, the text appears to have a number of parts that are consistently reworked to provide ever new combinations which are then utilised to further advance PKD's overall cosmology, but one that strangely never achieves a definitive totality. Its sprawling, rhizomatic structure, along with the vast quantities of information and language that are being plied into his writing, mean that the text itself starts to come to resemble the very universe he is attempting to describe; one whereby an ever-expanding reality is continually incorporating information which is transmitted between differing points, monads or indeed human individuals. So, just as the text accords to a networked paradigm in terms of form, so too does this model of interaction or information exchange start to bleed into the content of PKD's writing. Take for instance the following passage:

However, Valis is real and is subsuming progressively more and more of its environment. Its internal complexity continually grows. Its metabolism seems to be information and the processing of information. Its plural constituents are arranged in such a way as to constitute a language or information or messages; if you cannot see the arrangement you cannot read the message. And you cannot perceive Valis (2011, p.612).

'Valis', PKD's name or signifier for the entity that is synonymous with reality itself, is something that is metabolising information in its efforts to constantly expand. But it is an entity of 'plural' parts that together comprise a form of communication or language. I claimed earlier that language holds a special fascination for the 'psychotic' subject and that for PKD, his focus on language is often reformulated through technological terminology concerned with signals and modes of transmission. Early on in PKD's writing when he is first attempting to describe, or indeed account for, his 'mystical' experience, he writes of '2-3-74' that:

What I saw about the external disinhibiting structure which evidently surrounds each human being, as a sort of cube-like chamber, was the utilization of every

sort of datum, especially visual, so that when required that particular datum projected a signal (as I mentioned) which the intended person to be disinhibited received (ibid. p.69-70).

and:

This is indeed a kind of ship we are within, but in shape more like a gigantic hollow cube, all sides of which surround us and fire information and instructions in rapid, elaborate sequence: we are seeing the physical body of the creator, who animates all (p.72).

For PKD, his subjective universe is one consisting of information (signals) being fired at us from the environment surrounding each individual. However, for this data to be transferred, what is required is a disinhibited individual, a passive receiver (and then presumable transceiver) that comprises something akin to a node within this giant structure or cube like chamber. If we examine these quotes carefully we can see that 'information' or 'datum' is conceived in direct relation to physical bodies or disinhibited persons. The 'cube-like chambers' or 'gigantic hollow cube' encasing individual beings immediately brings to mind PKD's science fiction-esque imaginings, a paranoid conception of humans imprisoned within an invisible structure. Yet this structure is precisely the means by which information is 'fired' or 'projected' between 'intended persons'. This transmission of data or information occurs across and between bodies, between individuals who are disinhibited to such a degree that they can only act as completely passive terminals. Following which, if we examine a selection of quotes spanning the first half of the *Exegesis*' composition we get a sense of these bodies interacting within a networked logic. Take for instance:

the "signals" or events are incorporated into each of us as learning – learning by experience – and they permanently modify our brain tissue, leaving permanent although minute trace-changes in us. This way we store this information combining it and altering it, and we are prepared to transmit it again when instructed, to whoever were instructed to transmit it to. Each of us is a vast storage drum of taped information which we purposefully modify, each of us differently (p.129).

I am led to the inescapable conclusion that, totally unknowingly, we are all constituents of a vast living organism, and that everything which occurs in it, our reality, happens due to its deliberate intention – that of its own brain, NÖÖs or psyche- and, further, this vast living organism which governs and regulates our

every move and experience resembles an AI system or computer, and that under certain exceptional circumstances it can and does speak of one or more of us, its members – finally, the organism – or this part of it – is in trouble ..... We are the distressed fraction, member, circuit or element, or organ, part or unit (p.278).

So our little psyche-world systems are perpetually bombarded with incoming information which we process and, at the right time to the right other stations we transmit in the rightly modified form – but all this takes place *through* us as if we were transistors, diodes, wires condensers and resistors, all none the wiser (p.387).

Transistors, diodes, circuits, wires, organs, members, parts and individual stations; these are all terms PKD employs to describe human individuals that act as discreet units relaying or transmitting information to one another which together comprise a higher form of technologically inflected life, or as PKD terms - the 'body of the creator'. Individual beings are in turn modified by 'minute trace-changes' due to the effect of information passing through them. The 'vast living organism' which PKD asserts resembles a computer or AI is constructed from a networked relation between individual human beings processing and relaying data between themselves, indeed through their very bodies. PKD's attempts to theorise the nature of his universe following the events of '2-3-74' leads him to a model of interacting human bodies that exist to transmit information; a gigantic circuit board or relay of information wherein human bodies are directed and controlled without their conscious knowledge. The automatism, of which we covered earlier, takes on a new significance here as PKD works his involuntary action or behaviour into this model of human relatedness under the conditions of information exchange. We can note also that this picture of data being fired between disinhibited individuals to comprise a collective networked body (VALIS) is chiefly characterised by human beings connected to one another via data or mathematized language. I argued previously that much of PKD's '*sinthomatic*' writing endeavour - the *Exegesis* itself - was his creative means to fashion a social bond of sorts, one that he writes into being. One way of reading this concern for networks is to view PKD trying to resuscitate a social bond, albeit within the terminology of information technology. We get no better example of this when, in June 1978, PKD states in respect of the agency that he attributes to this grand system of information exchange:

The network voice – she talks to me. I am patched in to the network, so I am not alone (P.343).

By PKD ‘patching into this network’ he has built a connection with others around him and staved off complete isolation. This network of information provides something of a support for PKD’s fragile state of mind following the overwhelming experiences of early 1974. Although it is a voice that alerts PKD to this realisation, it is not established for him until committed to script. The network is in quite a literal, surface level sense, a social bond, the means by which he is connected to others.

We have then, on the surface of the text, a direct correlation between this notion of bodies, or a collective body and the network model. What conjoins the two for PKD is his evolving concept of information. This concern for information, as I have stated, straddles the entire *Exegesis* from beginning to end. It is arguably the dominant theme within his writing and one that is subject to constant revision and remodelling. For example, as early as June 1974, three months after the events of ‘2-3-74’, PKD writes in respect of his experience:

I had a keen intuition that information of some kind was arriving at us all, in fact bombarding us, from sidereal space (2011, p.8).

Fast forward to February 1982, mere weeks before his death, and we again find PKD still grappling with whatever it is that he saw bombarding him, and us, from the heavens or wider cosmos.

So since we can’t see the info we can see the structure, so we see plurality; when I saw Valis I saw unity, structure, hence info (ibid. p.891).

After eight years of constant writing, thinking and hypothesising, information still holds a special fascination for PKD. We get a sense from the above passages that our environment, or indeed our very reality, is one dominated by the flow and exchange of information, so much so that we are unwittingly connected to one another in a system that has total control over our lives. It is not hard to detect some of the defining characteristics of our age relating to ‘hyper-connectivity’ or ‘information saturation’ refracted through these statements. PKD, writing in the mid 1970’s, was, for all intents and purposes, prefiguring the age of mass digital communication, computerised modes of social interaction and perhaps even the diminished sense of individuality or agency that accompanies

contemporary experiences of globalisation. Many have drawn attention to the prophetic like quality of the *Exegesis* and the direct resonances it has to the information age.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, cybernetics and evolving techno-scientific theory was of great interest to PKD, as evidenced in his fictional works and published interviews. Perhaps no surprise that such ideas should feature in *the Exegesis* itself. Yet, what interests me most, and something perhaps less apparent in the comments on PKD's attunement to the age in which he lived, is the manner by which his outright crazy assertion that he was metamorphasizing into a form of 'living information' might not seem quite so mad if we read it alongside specific developments that occurred within information and cybernetic theory close to his own historical moment.

I want to make the case now for interpreting the *Exegesis* in line with developments in techno-scientific theory which doesn't just draw parallels with his cybernetic inflected language but focuses attention to the way in which his sense of bodily change, which we encountered above, is actually reworking the way in which 'information came to lose its body' towards the end of the twentieth century. In this sense, PKD came to view his own body as an immaterial non-tangible entity: *Disembodied information as a new form of life*. And this is the key arena in which we can appreciate how his altered relation to his body can not only be read clinically through the psychoanalytic lens of 'psychosis', but can simultaneously be read at the level of scientific and wider cultural development. Reading PKD's statements about his own sense of embodiment allows us to appreciate, at a more nuanced level, how his writing does not just evidence his own overt knowledge of cybernetics and the emerging information age, but the way in which his outright delusional sounding claim that he is transforming into something lacking corporeal support, itself mirrors a shift from materiality to immateriality that may well have started within information theory but has since crept into much broader arenas of socio-political life.

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<sup>66</sup> There are numerous writers (Burton, 2015; Davis, 2019) who have drawn parallels between PKD's writing and a cybernetic paradigm infused within it. PKD himself was a known reader of cybernetic theory. Burton and Davis have, likewise, emphasised the relevance of the internet and networked models of communication arising at precisely the same time period as PKD's revelatory insights.

### 8.3 Cybernetics, Information & Embodiment.

In order to advance this argument, I will briefly set aside the *Exegesis* and turn to developments in cybernetic theory. As we have noted, cybernetics was of real interest to PKD and he would have been familiar with aspects of it. My claim is that his 'mad writing' may be implicitly referencing a turn to disembodiment that may originate in the information theory of his day and that he literally encapsulates these developments in his outlandish claims about his sense of subjectivity. This, in turn, brings us full circle to earlier similarities with 'psychotic' structure and experiences of bodily change. In order to trace these developments within cybernetics and information theory, I will adopt N. Katherine Hayles' (1999) schema which identifies three distinct eras that occurred within the trajectory of this interdisciplinary field. The first pertains chiefly to the way in which information came to lose its body; essentially, how it came to be conceptualised as a phenomenon that was distinct from the various material forms in which it was thought to have previously resided. The second relates to the emergence of the cyborg as a cultural object in the second half of the twentieth century; and lastly, how in relation to these first two themes a third emerges which demonstrates how the construction of that thing called the human is gradually giving way to a different construction termed the 'Posthuman'.

Hayles (1999) identifies the Macy conferences between 1941 and 1960 as being especially relevant to the emergence of the idea of 'disembodied information' during the first wave of cybernetics. Specific conferences on cybernetics organised by Lawrence K. Frank and Frank Fremont-Smith were of central importance in defining cybernetics as a distinct theoretical discipline. At root, cybernetics began life as a cross-disciplinary science attempting to define and theorise processes of control and communication between systems with specific attention to the role of feedback and self-adaptive behaviour within such systems, whether they be machine or biological organism. What emerges from these pre-1960 Macy conference discussions is a view which places a mathematical theory of information as being of more importance than materiality when it comes to

understanding the dynamic *within* and the interface *between* different systems. Hayles (1999) notes that there was a degree of resistance to this reification of information from across the diverse range of academics and disciplines represented. Ultimately, however, this reification triumphed during the first Macy conference led by John von Neuman and Norbert Wiener, who asserted that the key issue in the man-machine interface was not energy but rather information. Adopting mathematician and cryptographer, Claude Shannon's (1948) theory of information as a "probability function with no dimensions, no materiality, and no necessary connection with meaning" (Hayles, 1999, p.52), Wiener (1985) defined information as something whose value was completely divorced from the context in which it resides. Essentially, information in this instance is stripped of meaning as such. It followed, therefore, that if information was an entity separate from the environs or material supports in which it was measurable, visible or identifiable then it could flow evenly between such material substrates unchanged, whether that be via the integrated electronic circuitry of a computer system or the neural pathways of the brain.<sup>67</sup>

Counter to this view that ultimately won out at the first round of the Macy conferences, was the information theory of British physicist, Donald MacKay (1951). Some years later, at the seventh conference, MacKay presented his view of information that would take meaning into account by focusing on the impact information had on the one who was receiving it. Contained within these differing views on information theory is the age old subjective /objective divide that underwrote the criticism or support for either viewpoint. Either information is an objective context free entity (Neuman and Wiener) or it is something that can only be measured or produced via subjective interpretation (as in Mackay's theory whereby it is defined by the impact it has on the one who receives it). Hayles (1999) notes that this debate provoked a good deal of anxiety within many of the conference participants who were attempting to ground cybernetics as a hard science that would be

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<sup>67</sup> Norbert Wiener himself was no stranger to theorising psychopathology. He devotes a chapter of his 1948 book *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in The Animal and The Machine* to the possibility of exploring computer like models of the brain to uncover the mechanisms behind psychiatric afflictions. He comes into close alignment here with Bateson's own rendering of the 'Double Bind' which portrays 'psychosis' as the result of problematic forms of communication.

free of semantics and subjective interpretation. If information was to be defined by what it *does* rather than what it *is*, then a whole host of subjective concerns could arise which would complicate, or indeed undermine, the scientific rigour and objective status of cybernetics as a scientific epistemology. Hayles writes that this:

formulation emphasises the reification that information undergoes in the Shannon-Wiener theory. Stripped of context, it becomes a mathematical quantity weightless as sunshine, moving in a rarefied realm of pure probability, not tied down to bodies or material instantiations [...] the price it pays for this universality is its divorce from representation. When information is made representational, as in MacKay's model, it is contextualized as an action rather than a thing. Verblieke, it becomes a process that someone enacts, and thus it necessarily implies context and embodiment (1999, p.56).

#### **8.4 Autopoiesis**

Before I draw attention to the relevance of these developments with the content of PKD's exegetic writing, I want to touch on one last additional shift within the trajectory of thought pertaining to cybernetics. The shift finds its beginnings in the above concern for reflexivity that Mackay, amongst others, used to problematize the new disembodied concept of information. This additional shift will enable us to further appreciate how the *Exegesis* essentially speaks to discourses drawn from developments in the techno-scientific theory of the time which then came to seep into wider social-cultural thought. Whereas the first wave of cybernetics was marked by a concern for homeostasis according to Hayles, the second, leading on from MacKay's thoughts, pertained to reflexivity. Although the notion of reflexivity did not find much favour in the first round of the Macy conferences, Hayles (1999) argues that from the 1960's onwards it came to hold central relevance to this evolving set of theories and knowledge. At the very beginning of the decade, Heinz von Foerster (1960) published a paper entitled *On Self-Organising Systems and Their Environments* which describes the paradox of observing systems. As one information theorists summarises, his paper argued that:



on the one hand, if the observer remains outside the system, it is not clear whether knowledge of its inner workings is possible; on the other hand, if the observer is part of the system, self-observation leads to an infinite regress that makes complete knowledge of the system impossible (Taylor, 2001, p.88).

Gregory Bateson himself noted in his own conference later in 1968, that if the role of the observer was to be problematized then a wholesale reworking of realist epistemology was required. Hayles (1999) identified two key figures who in one way or another took up this challenge, Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana. Their jointly authored work (1979) *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realisation of the Living* is the major testament to this. Their collaboration questioned the idea of any objective external world that could be discussed independent of the one that observes it. Essentially, this realisation problematized the very assumption of an independent reality existing irrespective of the observer witnessing it. Maturana and his colleagues would similarly highlight how no direct correlation could be discerned between an animal's perception of colour and the 'external world', leading him to conclude that perception is not fundamentally representational, it is in fact a constructed experience. From this insight, Maturana and Varela argued that circularity or reflexivity was at the heart of living systems. Indeed, no description of absolute reality was possible for them as the observer cannot escape the pitfalls of an endless self-reflexive manoeuvre. The basic tenet is that a nervous system's action is determined by its own organisation leading to this self-reflexive dynamic; a dynamic they termed autopoiesis meaning 'self-creating'. They defined such an organisational structure as follows:

An autopoietic machine is organised (defined as a unity) as a network of processes of production (transformation and destruction) of components that produces the components, which: (i) through their interactions and transformation continuously regenerates and realize the network of processes (relations) that produce them; and (ii) constitute it (the machine) as a concrete unity in the space in which they (the components) exist by specifying the topological domain of its relation as such a network (1979, p.78-79).

This autopoietic function is one that can be detected within the construction of the *Exegesis* itself and is something I have highlighted above; the endless reabsorption of elements of text back into

the writing process meaning it takes on a self-creating function of sorts.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, this autopoietic function is something that is central to the main characteristics of PKD's new form of life, not just one that references its self-organising capacity but one that stresses how life itself is morphing into something with no tangible, material support; something mirrored within cybernetic development itself.

### 8.5 (Dis)embodiment

We can state that Maturana's initial attempts to make autopoiesis the fundamental component of living systems, indeed to equate it with life itself, marks for Hayles the dividing line between first and second wave cybernetics. Initially, whereas Wiener and his colleagues had stressed the importance of a system's behaviour, Maturana argued that it is the system's autopoietic processes *generating* behaviour that is of primary importance. Furthermore, as Hayles writes:

whereas first-wave cybernetics played a large role in divesting information of its body, autopoietic theory draws attention to the fact that "information," so defined, is an abstraction that has no basis in the physically embodied processes constituting all living entities (1999, p.149).

The disembodied nature of information takes another layer of significance as it now exists only as an inference on behalf of the observer. Autopoiesis becomes the fundamental organising principle, following Maturana, for understanding a system's behaviour and the manner by which information and communications are understood in networked relations. Hayles reasons that such shifts mark a concern towards pattern and randomness (in terms of how we understand information) and away from previous concerns that tended towards an understanding based on presence and absence.

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<sup>68</sup> This autopoietic dynamism is also something commented upon by psychologist Kyle Arnold (2016) who undertook the aforementioned psychobiography of PKD. Arnold concludes that "although Dick does not appear to have been familiar with the work of Varela and Maturana, their views provide a scientific basis for his claims about living information. If all self-generating systems are by definition alive, and the Exegesis is a self-generating system, then it is by definition alive" (p.147). This is a bold claim. My point in highlighting this autopoietic quality to PKD's writing, however, is not to suggest that actually, yes, the *Exegesis* and by association VALIS are actually living entities, but rather to argue how important and widespread ideas within cybernetic thinking were playing themselves out in the content and construction of PKD's cosmology.

Indeed, a shift away from material presence/absence to informational pattern marks, for her, one of the key developments in communication, literary and textual production as well as a whole host of technological, economic and social processes in the late twentieth century. In commenting on this mutation in various diverse fields that impact upon our very sense of subjectivity, Hayles adds that:

the contemporary pressure toward dematerialisation, understood as an epistemic shift towards pattern/randomness and away from presence/absence, affects human and textual bodies on two levels at once, as a change in the body (the material substrate) and as a change in the message (the codes of representation) (ibid. p.29).

It is these changes that affect 'human and textual bodies' that I ascertain can be detected in PKD's exegetic writing, changes that exist at the surface of his textual output. We don't need to delve into the hidden logic of PKD's writing to find this correlation, as it is starkly apparent in the immediacy of his words. This correlation is manifest in two distinct ways. Firstly, PKD touches directly on the notion of information as something that exists independent of its supporting housing; take for instance this quote from January 1980:

I've got it. Valis is not an entity which thinks - e.g. a discorporate pure mind; or a mind incorporated, as our human minds are. No. It is a mind which uses all reality by which to think; so it is neither discorporate nor does it have a body as such (2011, p.569).

Although he appears to dart from one opposing view to the other (from discorporate to incorporate) his ultimate conclusion that VALIS, the entity comprised of discreet unit's exchanging information to one another via a network logic, is an entity that does not have 'a body as such'. It is a system of information exchange which appears to feed off reality itself and is chiefly characterised for PKD by its lack of material substrate. VALIS, or reality, is akin to a human mind that lacks any bodily organ with which to house it. Interestingly, VALIS, which PKD previously conceived of as a network of interacting human individuals, is now compared to the workings of the mind, workings that are so often framed in terms of neural networks and pathways. Whether VALIS is constructed as a giant circuit board implying computer type technology, or a discorporate human mind, the network paradigm weaves its way into his explanatory reflections. Again, shortly after this, PKD reflects that:

What I saw that I called the plasmate are the filaments of the vine; they are information, hence energy (or else information without a carrier) (ibid, p.596).

PKD's term 'plasmate' is yet another signifier he coins to describe the process by which a human body or entity has 'cross bonded' with information, an essential metamorphosis by which information has come alive. In this particular speculative offering, PKD states that he has observed the underlying basis of reality and that it accords to an arboreal construction; a construct which is once again comprised of information. We notice also that these filaments or vines (sounding oddly familiar to Schreber's rays or nerves) comprising reality are formulated in tandem with energy, an essentially non-tangible entity that exists independent of its carrier.<sup>69</sup> Although there is a danger of overly confusing the many intersecting concepts that PKD deploys over different pages of script (from VALIS to plasmate to reality and back again) the connecting thread between all of these at times evolving, dynamic concepts, is PKD's conception of information. Rarely do PKD's speculative ideas retain any static quality and their over theorisation leads to a strange sort of underdevelopment as no one concept, thought or idea in relation to '2-3-74' ever stays still long enough for one to fully appreciate its essential being. The one consistent theme, however, within the *Exegesis*, undoubtedly relates to the role of information.<sup>70</sup> Despite its ongoing conceptual evolution, PKD reifies it into a phenomenon that has no tangible, material essence. The VALIS network comprising reality is marked for PKD by interacting bodies transmitting an immaterial force which works between and through them; bodies themselves which are formed of information, a substance-less form of collective subjectivity.

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<sup>69</sup> We should also note the similarity here to the Deleuzean (1970) notion of affects which act in some sense independent of the body. We may also want to draw attention to the rhizomatic structure Deleuze puts forth by which affects amongst other things such as ideas or thoughts move between an arboreal like construction with no identifiable beginning or end.

<sup>70</sup> As Erik Davis (2019) states when commenting on the themes present within the life and work of 1970's counter culture figures including PKD, "*Information* becomes a thing-in-itself, an almost metaphysical substance that, through its technological instantiation in networks, massively shapes both individual and collective existence. Information not only became a technical expression (or perversion) of "spirit," but achieved a sort of collective, transhuman novelty through its circulation through networks. [...] All of these features are reflected in the deliriously mediated information metaphysics of our psychonauts" (p.394). PKD, the psychonaut, reflects these features throughout his writing to the point where it becomes the thing-in-itself, synonymous with the *Exegesis* and reality at large.

The second correlation pertains to that already raised above, the second wave focus on autopoiesis which came into prevalence precisely at the same historical moment as PKD's musings on the nature of the cosmos and his place within it. Some years before the above quotes detailing PKD's ideas in respect of disembodied or disincorporate information, PKD writes:

If this info is an entity in itself which can modulate itself, then to know this information is to be possessed by it; you are automatically in a symbiotic state with it. This is a new category of existence (2011, p.329-330).

What is recapitulated is not *another* homoplasmate but the same one; it gives birth to itself, replicating itself over and over again under the proper conditions (ibid. p.417).

PKD here is boldly establishing a 'new category of existence' but one that is chiefly marked by its own ability to 'modulate itself'. We noted above how, for Maturana, a system's self-reflexive ability, its capacity to create itself, is the chief characteristic of life whether that be biological or mechanical. PKD here too reasons that his networked body, VALIS, is able to instate a new way of being via its own 'modulation'. Again, we find similar themes in PKD's insistence that VALIS is able to give 'birth to itself' and instate a continual process of replication. The self-reflexivity at the heart of such autopoietic systems is also evident in VALIS as PKD comments on the feedback mechanism whereby the subject (or observer) necessarily implies the reality in which they are immersed. As PKD writes, 'to know this information is to be possessed by it' - one cannot analyse VALIS in any objective sense as to engage with it is to essentially enter into a closed system of mutual self-realisation. This symbiotic state ensures that no divorce can be established between an individual agent and the information comprising its reality. In addition, we will recall Maturana's quote above explicitly detailing the nature of autopoietic organisational structures, those whereby a network of constituent parts establish and reenergise the further processing of components that form a discreet 'concrete unity'. I have already highlighted how the *Exegesis* puts forth a model of reality as something consisting of discreet units transferring information which in turn metabolise and expand to subsume more of that very reality. I would argue that VALIS's self-creating capacity, and PKD's assertion that individual human agents exist in a mutual constitutive state with it, evidences

the autopoietic quality to the *Exegesis*' theorisations. Moreover, the manner by which PKD utilises his own exegetic material from earlier pages of script to revitalise and sustain its ongoing production speaks again to this autopoietic quality. We have then two distinct areas (autopoiesis and disembodiment) whereby PKD's writing on information and networks accord to the major strands within cybernetic theory that seeped into prominent areas of scientific, literary and societal process towards the end of the twentieth century.

Although I have targeted my comments on the similarity between PKD's 'information-embodiment' correlation with developments in cybernetics, a field very much operating within the hard sciences and abstract mathematical formulation, this shift from embodiment to disembodiment does not stop with information theory or the field of science. In fact, one could argue that it crept into much wider areas of social-cultural life around a similar time period and that PKD's pre-occupation with new forms of life and how they are managed or operationalised speaks directly to this. In his reflections on Foucault's (2010) later concept of biopower and related disciplinary forms, philosopher Byung-Chul Han (2017) posits that contemporary forms of power and authority have instated a shift away from biopower concerns with the management of bodies, towards what he terms psychopolitics. He frames it as follows:

But neoliberalism, a further development – indeed, a mutated form – of capitalism, is not primarily concerned with 'the biological, the somatic, the corporal'. It has discovered the psyche as a productive force. This *psychic turn* – that is, the *turn to psychopolitics* – also connects with the mode of operation of contemporary capitalism (p.25).

Originally, lecturing about biopolitics in the mid 1970's, Foucault's initial focus was very much on bodily capacities under capitalist modes of production. For Byung-Chul Han, neo-liberalism, which quickened in pace during the early 1980s under 'Reaganomics', for instance, has effectively marked a shift away from bodies towards psychic forms of production. As such, the networked digitised forms of late neoliberal capitalist production mirror the shift a decade or so earlier that occurred within the very technological paradigm that effectively underwrites the structure of this globalised

socio-economic system.<sup>71</sup> In truth, this equation between PKD's *Exegesis* and the effects of new formations of our collective existence based on information have been commented upon by a range of authors and compliment the discussion above. Burton (2015) channels similar sentiments in his work on the ecological paradigm that characterises the *Exegesis*' construction. Likewise, Eric Davis (2019) and Scott Lash (2010) have stressed the centrality of information to any understanding or framing of PKD's writing post 1974. Following this, I shall now close this chapter by offering another possible means by which we can conceive this 'information-embodiment' correlation within PKD's writing that not only, once again, draws from development within scientific theory and perhaps wider socio-cultural existence, but one that allows us to tie in a process I earlier argued to be at the heart of PKD's metamorphosis, one drawn from the temporal aspect of his supposedly psychopathological experience.

## 8.6 'Becoming-Information'

I have demonstrated how, arguably, the dominant theme within PKD's exegetic writing, that of 'information', mirrors fundamental developments within mathematics and the new discipline of cybernetics that took place in and around his revelatory experience. Indeed, the two central tenants that emerge from cybernetics in the 1970's, 'disembodiment' and 'autopoiesis', are refracted through PKD's conception of 'VALIS/information' as well as the self-sustained creation of the universe (or the *Exegesis*, which essentially amount to the same thing for PKD). Moreover, PKD quite literally embodied these developments and channelled them through his notion of VALIS and corresponding changes to his subjective sense of corporeality. We have then the foundation on which to argue for the *Exegesis* to have cultural significance beyond the clinical interpretation that provides 'psychosis' as a possible lens to understanding quite what PKD is on about during his exegetic writing. The outlandish, completely bizarre, if not outright delusional sounding notions that

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<sup>71</sup> Drawing heavily on Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical system, Maurizio Lazzarato (2014) argues that capitalism's primary mode of production is one that now concerns itself with the production of signs and signifying systems. As such, capitalism has moved away from forms of material to immaterial labour.

litter the *Exegesis* do in fact, when read in quite a literal sense, at the very least hold an uncanny resemblance to much of what Hayles documents. PKD's surface level cogitations on the nature of information, the means by which it connects individual human beings in a vast living network, as well as the self-creating disincorporate character of this system harness the central tenets within a prominent area of human knowledge that will come to play a hugely significant role in the 'cybernetic universe' and so-called 'information age' that we now inhabit. Yet there is another crucial component to PKD's writing that further emphasizes his attunement to these rapid developments in communicative technology and the resultant forms of subjectivity towards the end of the twentieth century. In Hayles' (1999) survey of these developments within techno-culture she leads to the revolutionary figure of the posthuman. She identifies four key characteristics:

- 1) The idea of the posthuman privileges informational pattern over materiality so that embodiment in a biological organism is seen as a non-essential attribute of life or consciousness.
- 2) In relation to consciousness, the concept entails the view that it is but one part of a much larger story and displaces its importance as the foundation of human identity.
- 3) With regard to the body, the posthuman view treats it as a prosthesis that we learn to manipulate. Extending or replacing this prosthesis is a logical next step.
- 4) Lastly, the posthuman view asserts that there are no absolute differences or demarcations between bodily existence and machine or computer technology. There is a possible interface or connection between the two (p.3).

Hayles' work demonstrates how the material body has given way to machine or informational pattern. The body is essentially undergoing dramatic change in the wake of advanced computer or machine technology, leaving no absolute differences or demarcations between them. The body, it seems, is becoming something other. In close proximity to Katherine Hayles' work is Rosi Braidotti, and in particular, her 2013 book, *The Posthuman*. In this work Braidotti reasons that the category



'posthuman' has emerged following a challenge to an anthropocentrism. She writes that the emergence of this posthuman form "opens up perspectives for affirmative transformations of both the structures of subjectivity and the production of theory and knowledge" (2013, p.66). Braidotti identifies three separate ways in which this has manifested itself and refers to them as the posthuman understood through, 'becoming-animal', 'becoming-earth' and lastly, 'becoming-machine'. We should be alerted here to the Deleuzian resonance running through these changing forms of subjectivity. The process of 'becoming-other' that Deleuze speaks of in respect of psychopathology and crucially alternative forms of temporality (such as PKD's orthogonal time) is deployed by Braidotti to formulate her three lines of flight that posthuman subjectivity has taken. In this sense, she is directly drawing from Deleuze and Guattari's 1980 collaborative work *A Thousand Plateaus* which outlines various differing arrangements of becoming such as 'becoming-intense' and 'becoming imperceptible'. 'Becoming', as I established previously, is the movement of the virtual within the actual, a process of internal self-differing allowing for new creative potentials and identities. Both concepts and corporeal bodies are subject to this 'process of becoming' and it is altered temporal frameworks that effectively underwrite these dynamic states. The posthuman offers one such avenue for the human being to undergo both a corporeal and conceptual becoming. Braidotti touches on Hayles' concern for the disembodied nature of this new posthuman subjectivity when, in relation to the process of 'becoming-machine', she writes:

the metaphorical or analogue function that machinery fulfilled in modernity, as an anthropocentric device that imitated embodied human capacities, is replaced today by a more complex political economy that connects bodies to machines more intimately, through simulation and mutual modification [...] electronic machines are, from this angle, quite immaterial: plastic boxes and metal wires that convey information. They do not 'represent' anything, but rather carry clear instructions and can reproduce clear information patterns (2013, p.90).

The relevance of this to my cultural analysis of PKD's exegetic writing is that PKD himself, I ascertain, underwent his own 'process of becoming' that he writes into being. The *Exegesis* can be seen in this regard as PKD's creative means of 'becoming' from 1974 onwards, a process that he brings into life

via his continued writing. I wish to complement Braidotti's work here by establishing my own Deleuzian informed concept of 'becoming-information' - a 'process of becoming' that PKD underwent and, moreover, a process that channels the above themes of disembodied information as well as interface with non-organic forms of life. Importantly, PKD's process of 'becoming-information' is his own expression of the emerging figure of the posthuman in the wake of cybernetic knowledge. It is this figure that can be utilised as an analytical device to establish the *Exegesis* as an object with wider cultural significance beyond the clinic. PKD's apparent madness, I argue, speaks to this new cultural construction and, thereby, elevates the *Exegesis* above a mere example of pathological functioning.

My engagement with a surface level reading of PKD's text, or rather, the aspects of the text that deals explicitly with the 'information-embodiment' correlation, leads to three distinct but nevertheless complimentary phases that can be organised in respect of PKD's changing body morphology. For the first phase of 'becoming' we can directly relate PKD's metamorphosis with information exchange. Take for instance the following quotes ranging over three years from mid-1975:

We must be an early stage in a life-form which metamorphoses into a higher space-time continuum (2011, p.197).

Perhaps the transformation of and in me in 3-74 was when this mimicking "plasma" reached me and replaced me – although I appeared outwardly the same (i.e., my essence changed – a new self-replaced the old) but my accidents stayed untouched (ibid. p.222).

One way it does this is by a continually growing development and transfer of knowing (awareness), by means of transferred information throughout the interstices or stations (p. 253).

For it, information *is* energy: its very psychic life energy – until it implants the "special signal" in the "fossil" .... Upon this 2-74 signal, contact with it is re-established, since now they know exactly when and where it is. So all that info I got wasn't meant for me but for it. It was living symbiotically in me – had been for some while, but at a subcarrier level (p.329).

PKD reasons that he is undergoing a process of evolution into a higher life form and that his very essence is being replaced by the action of information transfer between 'interstices or stations'.

Again, the network paradigm works its way into his process of 'becoming-other'. We may think, on first glance, that PKD's subjectivity is being effaced here altogether but there is a concern for life in amongst these bizarre declarations, a concern for a new form of vitality. As we noted above, post-humanism asserts that our subjectivity is developing into something else altogether whilst greatly reorganising our sense of human identity. PKD's own sense of identity is clearly being modified in the face of an evolution from human organism into something further enhanced. This is an enchantment that is predicated on technological development. This 'continual growing' as well as 'development and transfer of knowing' leads to a fundamental change of 'essence' and a 'new self' replacing the old. Although PKD asserts that he appears 'outwardly the same', the process of 'becoming-other' is leading him to merge with 'info' at a 'subcarrier' level energising him to morph into a higher form of life.

Yet, PKD's process of 'becoming-information' doesn't just reference this bodily metamorphosis into a higher level of (disembodied) life but also taps into the merging of life with technological or non-human objects. This second phase we can detect within PKD's 'becoming-information' speaks directly to one of Hayles' chief characteristics of cybernetic development and post-humanism i.e. the blurring of distinctions between organic matter and machine.<sup>72</sup> The figure of the posthuman emerges when the dividing line or demarcation between human and non-human cannot so easily be distinguished. Following on from the above quotes when PKD asserts that this new vitalism is conditioned by information 'living symbiotically' within him, we find further examples of instances where his bodily boundary has been breached by the interface with information or a non-biological entity. Take for instance the following:

This being replicates itself through – as – information .... We become it  
(p.337).

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<sup>72</sup> Extending his widely known thesis that consciousness exists on a continuum with the environment in which subjects are immersed, philosopher and neuro-scientist Andy Clark (2003) argues that humans have always been cyborgs and that what marks our humanity is an ability to integrate technology into our very being.

So somewhere along the line it entered me as information and patterned me so that in my own writing I replicated (and boosted) it; it got distributed (p.418).

The human body has cross-bonded here with some kind of appendage, something external to PKD's sense of bodily integrity. So much so that the human body is completely subsumed ('we become it') within this non-organic, non-biological being that 'enters' into the human body before overriding it entirely. By 1978, PKD reasons that this non-tangible form of information, that is capable of merging with his own body, is effectively leading to a novel conceptualisation of life or consciousness. Life itself is being altered, advanced or altogether reconstituted by the interface, and then submission, to an external non-biological force. Like a virus or pathogen entering a host, information comes to reshape the body in its own image once it has crossed and subsequently blurred the bodily threshold. The resonances with Braidotti and Hayles' notion of the posthuman are clear. By the time of the third phase of 'becoming-information', which PKD undergoes towards the end of 1978 onwards, the human body appears to have been done away with altogether. Life, it seems for PKD, now no longer requires any material substrate to exist. Information has become so dominant in its envelopment of biological human identity that it can now exist as a life form independent from any hard organic casing. PKD's process of 'becoming-information' has reached its natural conclusion as information now stands in its entirety as a new category of vitality or what he terms '*real* life'.

Yes, the info signals are to create homoplasmate life in us: impregnate us *with information* – info fired at us until we finally come to life – *real* life (p.430).

*Information is alive.* The basis of life of the mind or brain. Bottom line: Living information which impregnates us and brings us to life as beings (plasmates) (p.430).

The AI voice I hear is its voice. I am in symbiosis with it. This is to my benefit because it can crossbond me into it and hence make me immortal. It is higher species using us for its purposes (p.430).

still, there is such a thing as living latent information that somehow is an acausal analog of reality (p.602).

Life is to be found in the phenomena of information itself regardless of any carrier, host or material object. Information is then, in turn, able to instil 'true' life into PKD, he is able to become part of a

'higher species'. As Hayles (1999) documents, the posthuman arises when biological organisms are viewed as a non-essential attribute to life and I argue that this is precisely what PKD is attempting to formulate in the above passages. This is a version of information that lives free of any human individual but is nevertheless able to reconstitute such individuals to progress to another realm of vitality - *Disembodied information as a new form of life*.

We have, then, the following aspects of PKD's 'becoming' that lead us to the figure of the posthuman. A fundamental metamorphosis or transmutation of self, the addition of an external non-biological force effecting such a change, and finally the realisation that this new form of life or consciousness does not require a human or organic form with which to thrive. PKD's process of 'becoming-information' harnesses all of the above discussion on networks relations, disincorporation and autopoietic function. Essentially, PKD through his textual output is engaged in an act of self-creation which leads him to view his own subjectivity as something that exists in direct connection to another larger immaterial force. In fact, PKD's entire ontology is one now fused with a cybernetic paradigm favouring disembodied life over organic consciousness. By subjectively existing outside of usual chronological time, PKD is able to become something other and this process of othering refracts cybernetic discourse which has seeped into culture at precisely the same time as PKD's revelatory experiences. PKD has in effect *subjectivised* these cultural developments in mathematics and information theory, just as he internalised changing relations to temporality in our post-modern world. His inhabitation of a different form of temporality, different from those that would usually underpin the notion of static corporeality, enables him to re-create (or indeed self-create) his own identity. PKD has, over the course of his writing, actualised the virtual cybernetic image of the posthuman.



## Conclusion

### Chapter 9: On the Construction of Mad Knowledge

In 1993, O'Dell and Weidman, two researchers from the Department of Psychology in East Michigan University, published a paper entitled 'A Computer Content Analysis of the Schreber Case' in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. The authors claimed, citing an earlier attempt by researchers to analyse Schreber's *Memoirs* via a computational method, as well as Freud's and Lacan's interpretations, that "notwithstanding valuable insights, all of the above analyses somehow missed Schreber's' fundamental problem" (p.121). O'Dell and Weidman then set about to rectify this issue. To do this, they scanned the entire document to feed every word into a specially designed programme. The programme classified and categorized all the words inputted into the system to 'see whether they were used consistently and whether they had psychological interest' (p.121). O'Dell and Weidman added that 'only words that were clearly psychotic were categorized' (ibid). Following the results of their analysis, the researchers concluded that Schreber's thinking was:

"intact but obfuscated by his delusional system. We hypothesize that the delusions arose from the continual impact of voices of Schreber's thinking. A 'terrible, monotonous repetition of ever recurring phrases' or 'an empty babble of ever recurring monotonous phrases in tiresome repetition' must reduce one's mental efficiency. A bright person would have to try and make sense out of this torrent of nonsensical material, leading to an elaborate, incompressible delusional system, developed purely as a defence" (p.125).

Nearly one hundred years after the profound set of experiences that Schreber committed to writing, the key to unlocking his delirium is presented here via a computational analysis, an analysis that leads to a somewhat tautological conclusion that Schreber's madness, in the form of delusion, is caused by another aspect of his madness, the incessant phrases that impact on his mind.

What are we to make of this affair that strikes of a Philip K. Dick imagined future where computer programmes haphazardly diagnose individuals? Must we conclude that we no longer require the human reader to interpret a text? Can the task of obtaining knowledge from mad writing

become divorced from any possible bias or inherent fault on behalf of the human researcher? Perhaps the cold, calculating gaze of a computer programme can offer us a definitive understanding of what is going on within Schreber's delusional system. Moreover, perhaps advances in computer technology, that seeks to reduce interpretation to an objective scientific method, will do away with those researchers who simply apply and reproduce their theoretical knowledge when interpreting texts. Or perhaps not.

Leaving aside the authors' problematic statements to only include words within Schreber's *Memoirs* that were 'psychologically interesting' or 'clearly psychotic' (whatever a 'psychotic' word may be!), we should rightly conclude that such attempts to remove human interpretation from computational methods are always-already indebted to human predesign and arrangement. O'Dell and Weidman's criteria for allowing words to enter predesignated categories within this 'psychological' study speaks to this issue entirely. However, my point in highlighting this misguided attempt to identify Schreber's 'fundamental problem', is not to critique the employment of computer technology in the act of analysis per se. Rather, my point is to question whether the interpretation of mad writing can ever eschew the subjective knowledge base, political persuasions, ideological framings or historical situatedness of the interpreter. Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated how the act of interpretation, allowing for the construction of knowledge from mad writing, necessitates questions about how theorists arrive at their interpretations. I opened the study with the problematizing of this manoeuvre by current strands of thinking within the larger critical psychiatry arena: those drawn together under the banner of Mad Studies. For those figures within this new field of thinking about what madness is, the entire task of interpreting mad narratives is loaded with ethical and political pitfalls. The 1993 Michigan study (mentioned above) would no doubt fall foul of Mad Studies' ethical stance, which would highlight the complete decontextualization of the *Memoirs* by academics utilising a positivist pseudo-scientific method to divorce Schreber from any dialogue whatsoever. There are several questions that remains for me at



the end of this thesis. Do my analyses of PKD's *Exegesis*, built upon the insights gathered over our meta-analysis of the Schreber case, indicate whether the task of interpretation is ever possible without committing acts of epistemic violence? Is it possible to move beyond these debates within areas of research, such as Mad Studies, so that we do not get caught up in arguments about who can read who? And what will be my final consideration here, can we ever establish 'mad knowledge' between researcher and text?

Indeed, my thesis has explored this third question through three analyses of PKD's *Exegesis*, which all straddle the clinical and the cultural. My psychosocial reading over three distinct, but complementary, interpretations has established a connection between 'psychosis', temporality, advances in information theory and changing forms of subjectivity. Ultimately, this set of connections, which I believe blurs the line between 'psychosis' and sanity, or clinic and culture, is a different articulation of the initial philosophical framework that we examined for placing madness and knowledge in relation to one another. There is a strange interrelation between these two terms 'madness' and 'knowledge': they are mutually inclusive of one another, yet they also stand in stark contrast. I hope my readings expose this strange conjuncture. Moreover, they hold direct relevance for moving past the restrictive debates within Mad Studies that treat all forms of interpretation as acts of violence (asides from when such interpretation is pursued via the co-production of research with the authors of the texts in question). My three analyses of PKD's *Exegesis* demonstrate that interpretation, and by implication the production of knowledge, from mad writing is possible. Although any reading commits some violence to a text, the method I have employed in the thesis suggests the possibility for rendering meaning from madness. But most important, it does so in a way that does not reduce madness to pathology or reify it into a protected category of which no one, least of all well-intentioned researchers, can ever speak of.

## 9.2 Psychosocial Interpretation of Mad Writing

My reading of PKD's (2011) *Exegesis* has moved between several different theoretical approaches (largely Lacanian psychoanalysis and Deleuzian-inspired philosophy). It also draws from a methodological focus that separates surface from depth. My overview of the Schreber case has led me to foreground a specifically psychosocial approach to analysing mad writing, which conjoins the individual subject's psyche to their wider socio-cultural environment. The different theoretical and methodological strands that have been employed to read PKD's mad text are housed within my commitment to psychosociality. This, I believe, has enabled me to read madness in a way that goes beyond reductive debates that centre almost solely on epistemic violence.

This is not to say that those who raise the issue of epistemic violence or injustice are misguided in their examination of the way in which mad text, and mad experience, is often overwritten by other domains of knowledge. Rather, my reading suggests that there must be other ways to think about, and position, mad writing. The implications, or danger, of not moving past the debate on 'who can read who' is that this may result in madness not being read at all, for fear of acting unethically. The irony, however, is that this very manoeuvre of not reading madness effectively creates a distance between madness and culture at large. Removing madness from the gaze of academia, or research in general, further separates it from society. Consequently, madness continues to take on its all too familiar character as the ultimate 'Other' to rational thought, culture, and philosophy. This consequence would, I imagine, jar with a Mad Studies approach that seeks to remove the stigma and negative language that reinforces the exclusion of madness and mad people. We have then something of a conundrum: How do we read and discuss madness without at the same time overwriting it or whitewashing its essential character? How do we articulate madness itself without losing it?

My answer to this impasse is to conduct a psychosocial reading of madness that places an individual's diagnostic state in tandem with prevailing ideological, political or social currents. Such a

reading acknowledges the specificity of an individual's experience of madness. For example, in this study, I have shown how PKD's text demonstrates a 'psychotic' structure at work through his particular use of language, the place of his body, and the role of enjoyment in his writing. But I also tie this specific case of madness into the discursive arena in which it is played out. I situate his mad writing in respect of alternations in temporality and a cybernetic paradigm, which weaves its way through collective experiences of information and post-humanism. By holding onto these two sites, the individual and the discursive, or rather the continuum between them, we can navigate our way through the peculiar dynamic set out by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida: that posits madness as a strange kind of 'internal excess', which exists both at the borders of language and thought and as a condition at their centre. Affording madness one status or another as either inside or outside of culture loses its essential character: the means by which violence is actually committed. Often, madness is either brought back into the realm of culturally-sanctioned knowledge (psychiatry, psychoanalysis), and is effaced in the wake of expert terminology and specialised language, or it remains at the margins of culture—forever at a remove from intelligible understanding. If we only afford madness one of these positions, then its true essence will always elude us. Acknowledging that madness exists in both spaces (the space of the individual subject and the larger space of the discursive) simultaneously and that a continuum is at work across these spaces is fundamental to understanding madness. Focusing reading on such a continuum is the task for psychosocial analysis.

In my psychosocial readings of PKD's text, I demonstrate how his writings about his body accord to a Lacanian understanding of 'psychotic' structure. In addition, I have shown how by taking note of profound developments in wider culture (as conditioned by an informational paradigm) we can appreciate madness as existing as a distinct entity at the meeting of the individual psyche and the *socius*. In my view, this juncture, what I refer to as a continuum, is where reading practices should be focused if we want to analyse or interpret madness. Through a psychosocial reading of

madness, we can retain its radical ulterior essence, as well as its value as a cultural entity that reflects those social processes whilst also being defined by them.

Ultimately, a question that is subsequently raised from my interpretation of the *Exegesis* is whether there is something inherently maddening about contemporary notions of time and the associated informational paradigm leading to disembodied experiences of self? I have focused on how PKD's *Exegesis* illuminates our understanding of madness as well as cultural developments. I have concentrated my efforts on evidence of 'psychosis' within the text, and I have linked this to prevailing socio-technological shifts. However, a further line of enquiry could be an examination of whether the 'psychosis'-culture continuum is working the other way around. That is, do cultural developments and their associated impact on subjectivity resemble aspects of 'psychotic' experience? On reflection, though, I believe that we should resist the temptation to engage in this form of speculation. As my psychosocial study argues, madness in PKD's *Exegesis* is coextensive with vitally influential aspects of social and scientific development, which have a structuring effect on society and subjectivity at large. Yet, asking whether one's madness is in tune with society or whether cultural developments themselves harbour some form of madness misses the point. The two are not distinct from one another, and PKD's *Exegesis* shows us that separating madness from the world of shared meaning and knowledge is a false distinction. The *Exegesis* is equally testament to an individual's knowledge of the world via their continual interpretation of their place within it, as it is to their supposed remove from such a world due to their chosen language and terminology. Analysing the connection between 'psychotic' experience and cultural developments cannot start with the subject and proceed out to the social only, nor can it locate cultural themes and then reduce them to individual experience alone. The two are *mutually inclusive* of one another, and this 'psychosis'-culture connection speaks to the continuum that exists between subject and society. This acknowledgement of the interrelation between clinic and culture has provided the

conceptual space for me to derive and construct forms of knowledge from PKD's writing, while keeping madness at the very forefront of my reading.

### **9.3 The 'Foucault/Derrida' Debate Revisited**

Here, I am going to revisit the overarching philosophical framework that initially suggested to me that writing can express madness; and that such writing occupies a strange paradoxical position of being both inside and outside of discourse. By doing this, I hope to address how the psychosocial continuum between the individual subject and larger societal structure might be mapped onto madness: that 'internal excess' at the heart of philosophy that the Foucault/Derrida dispute suggested. In Part 1, I highlighted the relation of Freudian theory to the debate about how madness is conjoined to the social. Following our journey through the main theoretical critique of psychoanalysis by Deleuze and Guattari, it is necessary now to review their work against the philosophical dispute that opened this thesis in order to see if schizoanalysis has anything different to offer us. In situating the 'Foucault/Derrida' debate against schizoanalysis, first, we must remember that madness does not necessarily occupy an extra-discursive position (outside of reason and history). Indeed, madness may well be a fundamental excess residing at the core of social existence. Deleuze and Guattari's (1972) attempt to correlate 'schizophrenia' with the workings of capital speaks to this proposition. For Deleuze and Guattari, 'psychosis' or 'schizophrenia' is an integral aspect of contemporary social functioning, and it is synonymous with capitalism itself. Second, regardless of whether we view Oedipus as an operator specific to capitalism, or side with a Lacanian symbolic interpretation, the possibility of reading ideological themes within the content of madness appears, theoretically at least, possible. Irrespective of the way we conceive of 'psychosis' (problematic symbolic resolution of Oedipus complex versus the deterritorialised limit of the

desiring-machine) we arrive at the same point. That is, the textual representations of 'psychosis' can potentially express social, cultural and historical investments.<sup>73</sup>

As shown, many thinkers have attempted to demonstrate how madness in its textual form can uncover larger social, political or ideological themes (from Santner's crisis of symbolic investiture to Kittler's discourse networks). Yet, there remains a query as to how an individual subject's 'psychotic' experience can channel such broader psychosocial themes into writing. There is the theoretical basis for understanding this via the continuum, which I hold exists across the subject-socius divide. But how does this lead to delusions or paranoid ideas reflecting specific cultural traits? In answering this, whilst also adding my contribution to this idea, I want to briefly return to something I put forward during the discussion of PKD's ability to bridge clinical and cultural themes via his concept of orthogonal time. The construction of mad knowledge, I argue, is perhaps made possible by the oscillation between one's private subjective experience of reality (ontic) and the manoeuvre to reformulate this experience through pre-existing social criteria and understanding; essentially pre-existing knowledge (the epistemic). That is, the 'psychotic' experience communicates through this appeal to socially shared knowledge. In my view, what ties these two domains together is the process of subject formation, something both Lacan (in the concept of his *sinthome*) and Deleuze (via his notion of becoming) have expended great energy in presenting. I hold that this relation (between the ontic and the epistemic) can support us in understanding how a singularly private experience that falls outside of the usual remit of socially shared understanding can

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<sup>73</sup> The relation between Lacan and Deleuze's thought is complex and has invited a significant amount of discussion. We can state that within *Anti-Oedipus*, the relation to Lacanian theory is somewhat ambiguous with Lacan's conception of Oedipus being met at times favourably. Deleuze and Guattari, for instance, state quite clearly that 'Lacan does not enclose the unconscious in an oedipal structure. He shows on the contrary that Oedipus is imaginary, nothing but an image, a myth' (1972, p.341). In fact, throughout *Anti-Oedipus*, Lacan repeatedly figures as a potential ally and perhaps the most schizoanalytic of all the psychoanalysts discussed. By the time of *A Thousand Plateaus*, however, Deleuze and Guattari dismiss Lacan, and no further mention is made of him or his theoretical approach. Peter Hallward (2010) argues that despite the initial warm reception Lacan received in *Anti-Oedipus*, there are irreconcilable differences between his system of thought and that of Deleuze's. He traces at least five moments of divergence between the two. Drawing upon the opposing views pertaining to the limits of their respective fields of enquiry, Hallward states that the competing notions of intersubjectivity, representation, the primacy of signification, and the place of the unconscious itself mark the complete incompatibility between both thinkers. Despite the favourable view of Lacan within *Anti-Oedipus*, it seems that Deleuzian theory starkly contrasts with Lacan's overall theoretical project.

reproduce, once presented in various discourses, the prevailing social, political or larger ideological elements at play within any given historical moment. The 'psychotics' attempt to rebuild their subjectivity necessitates the need to draw from the available symbolic, linguistic and knowledge-based constructs circulating around their immediate psychosocial environment. In my view, PKD does just this in *Exegesis* and that this ontic-epistemic mechanism is another route we can take in an effort to explain this peculiar attribute of mad writing that is able to express profound aspects of socio-cultural life.

Such aspects speak to this very issue at stake within Foucault and Derrida's debate. As such, I conclude that 'psychotic' text can construct mad knowledge and that interpretation is possible. This is because madness and knowledge are not diametrically opposed to one another, as many areas of contemporary science and medicine have us believe, far from it. The philosophical debate that opened this thesis provides continued relevance to Mad Studies and the wider domain of critical psychiatry. By problematizing relations of internality and externality, it provides the philosophical space from which very real ethical and political practices can follow. In this way, madness can be conceived as something not necessarily alien to the world of intelligible communication and understanding that we think we reside in.

#### **9.4 The Exegesis of Daniel Paul Schreber**

Having reviewed the central theoretical positions and influences underscoring this PhD thesis, as well as the philosophical arguments that have enabled this project, I now revisit the mad writing that inspired the whole project. Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs* and Philip K. Dick's *Exegesis* have been the main focal points to this investigation into the nature of 'psychotic' text and the possibility of constructing knowledge from it. I have consistently placed the two writers in tandem with one another, and I have, at times, pointed towards glaring similarities between their supposed madness. However, it is essential to note that there are key differences between them, which should

be recognised to ensure that the *Memoirs* and the *Exegesis* do not start to occupy the same critical terrain. Because I have made attempts to situate them both as instances of mad writing does not mean that they inhabit the same space, nor that they share some fundamental over-arching affinity. To make this correlation collapses the texts and, by implication, many other instances of mad writing into the same abstract phenomenon. Indeed, the *Memoirs* and the *Exegesis* are distinct, and they should be read as such.

Beyond the obvious ethics of treating all instances of mad writing as fundamentally different iterations of the same underlying social or psychological process, it is important to establish the key differences between the texts. Many readers and critics have pointed towards the inherent similarity between PKD and Schreber. For instance, the editors of the *Exegesis* state:

Dick's mystical vision or apparent psychosis seems to put him in touch with the eternal feminine. This is one of the many moments when the *Exegesis* resonates with Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of my Nervous Illness* (1903), where the erstwhile high court judge became convinced that his body took on breasts and female genitalia in order to be properly penetrated by the rays of God and to redeem the Universe (2011, p.372).

Moreover, a number of commenters have also drawn attention to the fact that PKD had read Schreber during the course of his psychological studies. As biographer Emmanuel Carrère (2006) notes, having read Freud's paper, PKD—in his typically playful style—decided that the *Memoirs* could make a great work of science fiction—if retitled *The Man Whom God Wanted to Change into a Woman and Penetrate with Larva in Order to Save the World*.<sup>74</sup> In reading this, there is a danger that we could come to view the *Exegesis* as an instance of PKD actively playing with his psychoanalytic knowledge of paranoia. This would call into question my attempt and that of others to align his madness with Schreber. But in my view, this would be an all too easy and clumsy manoeuvre to

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<sup>74</sup> Carrère (2006) attempts to channel PKD's thoughts and questions from the science fiction author's internal perspective, 'What if Schreber was right? What if his supposed delusions were in fact an accurate description of reality? What if Freud was just another self-righteous know-it-all, pathologizing a man who understood better what was really going on?' (p.39). Laurence Rickels (2010) in his wide-ranging analysis of PKD's fiction goes further still and suggests, without much in the way of evidence, that PKD's 1959 book *Time Out Of Joint* was the direct result of PKD's reflections on the Schreber case!



make. Aside from the comments regarding the science fiction potential of Schreber's script, to my understanding, PKD never mentioned Schreber's text or Freud's paper again. Furthermore, neither of these works features in the *Exegesis* at all.

But what if PKD had consciously (or not) incorporated Schreber into his own madness during his eight years of incessant writing? There are definite similarities between the *Memoirs* and the *Exegesis*: in the concern for sexual identity, as well as in the contrast between techno-scientific language and overt spiritualism (themes that are common to many delusional and paranoid accounts). Despite these likenesses, however, there are also startling differences. On the one hand, Schreber presents his cosmology as one intact, complete totality. There is a logic to it from start to finish, and the intricate nature of 'nerves, rays and the forecourts of heaven' are conceived within one grand design or construct. The *Exegesis*, on the other hand, is radically different. PKD's text is an exercise in reformulation and transformation, which ensures that no definitive unified system is ever achieved. He offers us multiple levels of analysis repeatedly, and he consistently attempts to abstract himself from his writing only to reinsert his own next level analysis. I am sure this complexity will continue to present difficulties for those who wish to engage seriously with PKD's exegetic output. He has already analysed his experience for us many times over. Hence, my analysis of PKD is of his own reading: an analysis of an analysis or an exegesis of an exegesis. This stands in stark contrast to Schreber, who presents his delusional system as one coherent world view. It is not undone and reconstructed multiple times over. It exists as one totality.

There is another important difference to note between Schreber and PKD. Whereas commenters and critics, for the most part, take Schreber's madness and experience of 'psychosis' for granted, PKD's madness is far from certain. Indeed, the question of PKD's mental state never seems to go away, and commenters and critics are routinely engaged in the act of looking for something that can prove that he was certifiably mad; even though, the answer to this question is unobtainable. Curiously, such assurances about Schreber's madness are rarely sought, and his

'psychosis' is taken at face value. Of course, Schreber was committed to an asylum for many years, and his *Memoirs* certainly indicate some form of paranoid suffering. Yet, to label Schreber as 'psychotic' repeats, in some way, the very manoeuvre that this project takes issue with. We do not know, and never can know, what Schreber's experiences pertain to. They are his experiences alone. Even if we remain in the domain of medical science, we cannot ever be certain that he was not suffering from some form of organic brain injury, a viral infection, early onset dementia, or any other medical affliction that can produce 'psychotic'-like symptoms. Granted these other explanations appear unlikely, but they do point toward an inherent problem in psychiatry: all diagnoses are informed opinions, not concrete representations of a hard-underlying reality.

Lastly, we must in the spirit of Mad Studies acknowledge that PKD never intended for his writing to be utilised in the way that I have done in this thesis. Neither, of course, did Schreber. Schreber was posthumously co-opted into the psy-discourses, while PKD appears, for the most part, to have resisted this in any substantial sense. Nevertheless, my project has begun to incorporate PKD and his work into the psy-discourses—albeit with a strong critical stance toward those very psy-discourses. Would PKD have approved? I am uncertain. His anti-psychiatry credentials are complicated. Although PKD revelled in satirising psychiatry and the mental health care of his day, by the time of *VALIS* (1981), the novel inspired by his visionary experiences (what he called 2-3-74), any discussion relating to hospital wards or the care afforded to the mentally ill is fairly complementary. Given that *VALIS* contains his most lengthy engagement with the mental health care system in existence, it is curious that any anti-psychiatric sentiment is largely disavowed. I think it is safe to assume, that my attempt to situate aspects of his *Exegesis* in line with clinical understandings of 'psychosis' would, at points, have been met favourably with PKD's own theorising on his experience. But, more likely than not, it would have been in stark contrast to how he felt towards his life changing events for much of his time spent reflecting on them. I hope that my critical attitude towards what we actually mean by 'psychosis', and the way I have consistently sought to

demonstrate that the *Exegesis* has value beyond strict clinical understandings of 'psychosis', would have met with some degree of interest from its author. I do not doubt that the conundrum that his writing presents to myself and many others besides, as well as the multiple attempts to decipher it, would have been pleasing to this most enigmatic of writers and personalities.

### **9.5 Madness and Method: On the Possibility of Interpretation**

After a lengthy journey through the writings of the mad, and my efforts to question the very possibility of interpreting madness, I close here with a review of the methods that I have employed throughout to gain insights and procure knowledge from PKD's writing. As mentioned, I have drawn these methods mainly from work already undertaken on Schreber, as well as from those present in the philosophical debates centred on madness' relation to writing. By building on contemporary critical approaches to mad narratives, and some of the different methods generally employed with texts, I believe that I have formulated an approach to mad writing. The most vital aspect of my engagement with mad text has been a commitment to multiple analyses of the text in question, drawing from a plurality of theoretical understandings. As stated, this has allowed space for ambiguity, difference or, indeed, contradiction to emerge in the analysis of mad text, which resists any final dominant mode of interpretation. I have used theoretical frameworks that have had a degree of commensurability between them. But I have also engaged with theoretical approaches that are in direct contrast to each other. My use of psychoanalysis and schizoanalysis is one such example. Although not the only epistemological system for engaging with mad writing, I have found psychoanalysis, particularly in its Freudian/Lacanian guise and schizoanalytic critique, to be well suited to interpreting mad writings, while also maintaining fidelity to the Mad Studies project. This preference is due to the way that Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis de-pathologizes madness and brings madness back into the realm of discourse, knowledge and culture. Just as with the use of multiple theoretical sites, I have also found oscillating between differing reading practices frees up

analysis from delimited and closed conclusions. Further, the concept of overdetermination has greatly assisted this project and been key in helping me resist the worst excesses of epistemic violence. Although drawn from a specifically psychoanalytic informed methodology, overdetermination can be generalised to reinforce the notion that no specific reading can have final word on any text. My engagement with PKD's writing and, to some extent, Schreber's *Memoirs* validates the idea that interpretation should be thought of as a continuous and, therefore, open process.

In many respects, this entire PhD thesis is concerned primarily with the issue of method: which methods should we employ to read madness? What methods can realistically be drawn from philosophy or theory? How does method itself leads to favouring certain interpretations over others? I believe that this concern for method and how we read madness will bridge the gap between the highly abstract and theoretical terrain in which this thesis sits and more practical engagements with those deemed mad and their associated works of art. As someone employed in mental health care, I wonder if my reading practices above could possibly inform the direct work with those who find themselves in contemporary mental health services. Disciplinary and professional contexts often provide individuals with the guides, assessment criteria, terminology and overarching system of knowledge with which to intervene in the lives of the mad. Could it be possible that a concern for multiple levels of understanding, informed by a plurality of theoretical and practical approaches, may help to avoid the reductive and potentially harmful engagements with those deemed mentally ill? I believe that by maintaining a commitment to true dialogue with another's experience or narrative, as well as to understanding that there are always different ways in which thoughts, feeling and behaviours can be interpreted, we might be able to move away from forms of practice that lay claim to being the correct way in which mental health services are delivered.

I referenced my role within the mental health services at the start of this thesis. Incorporating such a multi-level analysis or anti-authoritarian approach within my everyday practice is undoubtedly a tricky task. Moreover, to do this, for the most part, would be in opposition to the professional and statutory contexts in which I work. Nevertheless, I am certain that such an approach can assist critical thought and action within the field of mental health. I am also keenly aware that the act of interpreting an individual's madness, whether in the form of diagnosis or via more abstract academic critique, is intimately linked to a whole set of socio-political relations. Who is able to interpret who has at its heart a concern for power. We witnessed earlier how the interpretation of mad narratives have been used to demarcate disciplinary or intellectual differences between various thinkers. This remains true with all acts of interpretation based on the behaviour, thoughts, feelings, speech acts or indeed artistic creations of those labelled mad. In this thesis, my journey through these issues has reminded me that all interventions in the lives of those in receipt of such labels can help to reinforce those disciplinary and professional boundaries; boundaries that actively serve to exclude or include those within relations of power. Maintaining a dialogue with madness and the mad, who are traditionally placed outside of the walls of intelligible communication and understanding is, for me, perhaps the most vital issue at stake. In a time when true dialogue across the wider social spectrum is so sorely lacking, examining how we attempt to understand radical otherness seems to me more pressing than ever.

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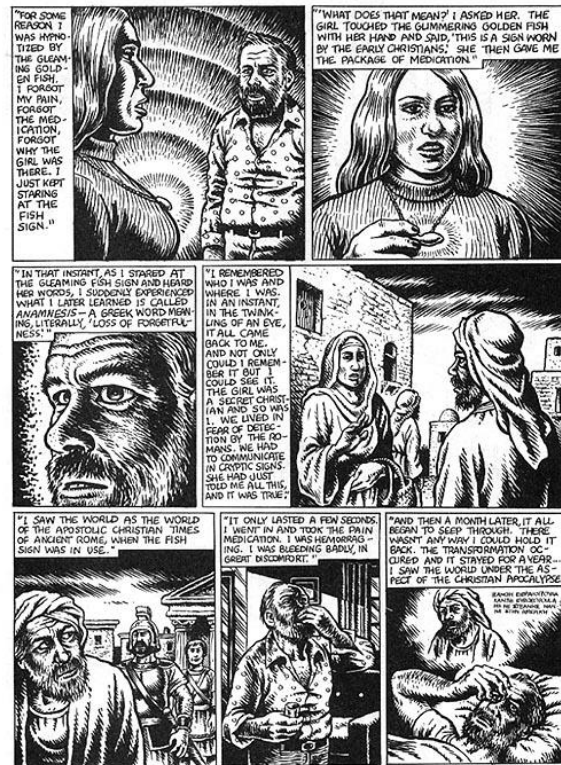
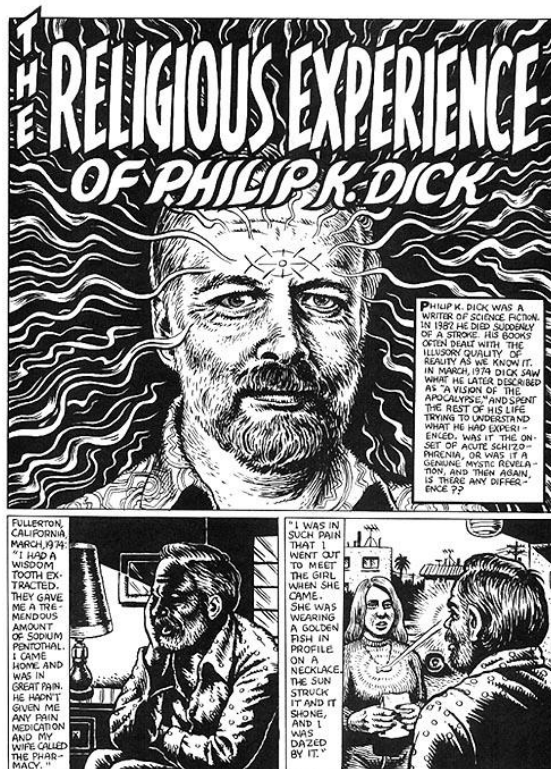
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Attachment: Robert Crumb (1993) "The Religious Experience of Philip K. Dick" in *Weirdo Magazine* (17)





"THERE IS NO REASONABLE ARGUMENT THAT WOULD ELUCIDATE WHAT THAT WAS THAT WAS FLOWING AROUND THE ROOM LIKE ST. ELMO'S FIRE... AND IT THINKS/IT GOT INTO MY BRAIN AND MADE ME THINK... IT DIDN'T THINK WHAT WE THINK..."

"...I WAS LOOKING AT MY NOTES—IT'S OVER SEVEN YEARS LATER, AND I'M STILL TAKING NOTES, IN AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND... IT DID NOT THINK IN DIGITAL, SYNTACTICAL, VERBAL INTERIORS... IT DID NOT THINK IN VERBAL TERMS... IT THOUGHT PURE CONCEPTS WITH-OUT WORDS, BUT IT WASH WITHOUT RATIO-CINATION... IT TRANS-FERRED TO MY MIND CONCEPTS THAT IN SEVEN YEARS OF TRY-ING IN WORDS I'VE ONLY NOW BEEN ABLE TO REDUCE THEM—"

"I'VE FINALLY FOUND A MODEL THAT WAS SUGGESTED TO ME BY A PROFESSOR FRIEND. IT LOOKED LIKE A BINARY COMPUTER, ON A FLICKER POSITION OF 'OFF' AND 'ON'. IT JUST WASN'T A MIND LIKE WE HAVE MINDS."

"ONE OF MY EXP-ERIENCE-ES... IT WAS '74 BOUGHT ONE OF THOSE FISH SIGNS WITH THE GREEK LETTERS ON IT, AND PASTED IT UP ON MY WIN-DOW."

"I WAS SITTING THERE ONE DAY AND THE UPSILON, WHICH LOOKS LIKE A CAPITAL 'Y', SUDDENLY TURNED INTO A PALM TREE, AND THEN OPENED UP INTO THE ENTIRE MESOPOTAMIAN WORLD, THE MIDDLE- EASTERN WORLD."

"...THAT PERSONALITY GRADUALLY TOOK ME OVER FOR A MONTH, AND THEN FOR ABOUT A YEAR I WAS THAT OTHER PERSONALITY. IT WAS SO FUNNY... I USED TO BE ABLE TO PICK UP HIS THOUGHTS WHILE I WAS FALLING ASLEEP. AND I PICKED UP HIS THOUGHTS ONE NIGHT AND HE WAS THINKING, 'THERE'S SOMEBODY ELSE INSIDE MY HEAD, AND HE'S LIVING IN ANOTHER CENTURY... MEANING ME.'"

"I THOUGHT, 'TELL ME ABOUT IT'. I CAN SAY THE SAME THING! AT FIRST HE THOUGHT HE WAS STILL BACK IN ROMANIA, HE HAD EVERYTHING WRONGS. HE THOUGHT THE ROMANS WERE GOING TO COME AND GET HIM, THAT WE HAD TO DEVELOP ELABORATE CODES AND STUFF TO E-VADE THE ROMANS."

"HE TRIED TO WORK THIS OUT WITH TESS, AND SHE KEPT SAYING, 'BUT THERE ARE NO ROMANS! ROME HAS BEEN GONE FOR 1500 YEARS!'"

"NO, NOPE," HE SAID, "NOW WHEN I PUT MY FINGER ON A BUTTON ON MY SHIRT IT MEANS THAT WE'RE IN THE PRESENCE OF A BUTTON-DOWN MIND, AND WE CAN'T TALK."

"TIE HAD THE SENSE OF A REGIME THAT WAS MURDEROUS, NOT JUST OPPRESSIVE, BUT MURDER-OUS. HE THOUGHT CHRISTIANITY WAS AN ILLE-GAL RELIGION. HE WAS AFRAID OF BEING KILLED FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN, THAT'S WHAT HE WAS A-FRAID OF... DAMNEDST THING..."

"HE WAS QUITE CON-FUSED BY THE SOCIAL SIT-UATIONS A-ROUND HIM. HE KEPT IN-TERPRETING THEM IN GREGO-RIAN ROMAN TERMS... HE COULDN'T DRIVE THE CAB. HE COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT THE PEDALS AND STUFF WERE FOR... SO I HAD TO GIVE UP DRIVING FOR AWHILE."

"I THINK THE SPIRIT OF ELLAHU CAME TO ME IN 1974. THAT HEART AND SPIRIT RETURNING TO ME... I DO BE-LIEVE THAT BECAUSE IT WAS AT RESSOVER, THAT IT HAPPENED, AND THERE WAS SOME KIND OF VIS-OROUS SPIR-IT IN ME, AND IT WAS NOT ME AND YET WAS HUMAN AND YET MORE THAN HUMAN."

"IT WAS TOM DISCH WHO FIRST SUGGESTED TO ME THAT THIS MIGHT BE THE CASE, AFTER HEAR-ING MY DESCRIPTION IN LATE '74 OF MY EXPE-RIENCE HE SAID IT SOUNDS LIKE ENTHOUSIAS-MS BY ELLAHU, AND I LIKE THAT IDEA... I FOUND THE IDEA PLEASANT..."

"IT'S BE-LIEVED THAT THE SPIRIT OF ELLAHU RETURNS TO EARTH PERIODIC-ALLY TO INFUSE ITSELF INTO HU-MAN BE-INGS, AND I KIND OF LIKE THAT IDEA... IT'S SORT OF, YOU KNOW, MEANING-FUL TO ME."

"IT'S THE SAME AS BELIEVING THE HOLY SPIRITS... I SUPPOSE IT COULD BE THAT... I COULD SIMPLY BE A CHURCHGANGSTIC CHRIST-IAN... I DON'T KNOW. I JUST DON'T THINK IT AS THE HOLY SPIRIT... I THINK ITS ELLAHU OR... THE SPIRIT OF GOD, WELL, MAKE IT 'Z' THE HOLY SPIRIT, I DON'T KNOW... HOW DO I KNOW? I MEAN, WHO CAN TELL ONE OF THEM? THERE'S NO REFER-ENCE BOOK THAT YOU COULD TURN TO SEE EXACTLY..."

"I JUST KNOW THAT SOME KIND OF SPIRIT TOOK ME OVER... THOUGH ITS HELP I WAS ABLE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS AND CONQUER, THE THINGS I COULDN'T DO... IT SEEMED ABLE TO DISCERN ANY-THING IT LOOKED AT..."

"...I DO HAVE GRANDIOSE ILLU-SIONS THAT THE SPIRIT OF ELLAHU ENTERED ME AND I UTTERED PROPHESIES... AND FOR WHAT?"

"...BECAUSE THE PROPHECIES HAD TO BE FULFILLED, THAT ELLAHU COMES FIRST AND SECOND, THAT THE NEWS BE RE-VEALED, AND THAT IS WHAT JOHN THE BAPTIST DID FOR JESUS... HAVING DONE SO HE FLED AWAY..."

"IN FACT THEY CUT OFF HIS HEAD, AND BY THE WAY DREAMED A-BOUT THAT... I WAS IN A DUNGEON, A ROMAN DUNGEON, AND THEY CAME AND CUT OFF MY HEAD, TOOK A WIFE AND GARROT-ED ME. I DREAMED THAT, AND THAT WAS MY MEMORY OF MY LIFE... I WAS JOHN THE BAPTIST HAVING MY HEAD CUT OFF."

"I REMEMBER THEM COMING TO THAT CELL, AND TAKING AND SLICING MY HEAD OFF... IT WAS HOR-RIBLE... AND YOU KNOW WHAT I DID WHEN THEY CAME THROUGH THE DOOR? I CURSED THEM WITH ALL THE RURY I HAD... THERE WAS NO LOVE IN ME FOR THEM AT ALL... JOHN WAS A VERY FIERY PERSON, WHO WAS VERY VULGAR... IT WAS ELLAHU, AND IT WAS ME."

"THIS VOICE THAT I HEARD, THAT I CALL 'THE A' VOICE' IS THE VOICE THAT ELLAHU HEARD. THE STILL SMALL VOICE, THE LITTLE MURMURING VOICE... IT SPOKE IN A FEMINE VOICE... I HEARD IT SAY..."

"THE TIME YOU'VE WRITTEN FOR IT COME YOUR WORK IS COMING, THE ROMAN WORLD IS TRANSFORMING, AND IT IS ALIVE!"

"I ASKED 'THE I' CHING IF INDEED THE PAROUSIA (THE SECOND COMING) WAS HERE, CHRIST HAD RETURNED. I GOT DARKENING OF THE LIGHT AND THE FOLLOWING LINE, THE ONLY TIME I EVER GOT THIS LINE..."

"DARKENING OF THE LIGHT APPEARS HIM IN THE LEFT THIGH... HE OWES AND WITH THE DISCOVERY OF A HORSE, GOOD FORTUNE."

"HERE THE LORD OF LIGHT IS IN A SUBORDINATE PLACE AND IS OPAQUED BY THE LORD OF DARKNESS, BUT THE INJURY IS NOT FATAL... IT IS ONLY A HINDERANCE... THEREFORE HE THOSE WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH TO SAVE ALL THAT CAN BE SAVED... THERE IS GOOD FORTUNE... INTERPRET THESE WORDS AS SAYING 'THAT INDEED CHRIST HAS RETURNED... THE LORD OF LIGHT IS THE CHRIST WHO HAS COME HERE AND SUBORDI-NATED HIMSELF... THE SAVIOR, YOU SEE?'"

"THE LORD OF DARKNESS IS VERY POWERFUL... WE HAVE POWERFUL ADVERSARIES, THEY DON'T GIVE UP THEIR INTEREST IN POWER VOLUNTARILY... THEIR POWER MUST BE TAKEN FROM THEM. WE ARE IN A CRIS-IS SITUATION OF THE LINE THIS PLANET HAS NEVER SEEN BEFORE... WE HAVE LUNATICS IN POWER WITH THE CAPACITY OF BLOW-ING UP THE PLANET THEREFORE IF WE ARE DELIVERED FROM THESE PEOPLE THE PLANET SUR-VIVES, THE ECO-SYSTEM IS NOT DESTROYED."

"IN 1976 I TRIED TO KILL MYSELF BECAUSE ELLAHU HAD LEFT ME. I FELT HIM LEAVE AND IT WAS AWFUL... THERE IS NOTHING WORSE IN THE WORLD, NO PUNISHMENT GREATER THAN TO HAVE KNOWN GOD AND NO LONGER TO KNOW HIM... THE VOICES STOPPED TALKING TO ME... I DON'T CARE IF I LIVED OR DIED..."

"IN ESSENCE, I HAD SERVED MY PURPOSE IN FLOW MY TEARS' ONE OF HIS BOOKS IN WHICH THERE IS A CIPHER, A SECRET PROPHETIC MESSAGE, AIMED AT PARTICULAR PEOPLE, AND WHICH DICK WAS NOT EVEN AWARE OF WHEN HE WROTE THE BOOK IN 1974. I RALLIED BACK FROM THE SUICIDE ATTEMPT BUT IF I HADN'T RALLIED IT WOULD HAVE ALL GONE ON WITHOUT ME."

"ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABATHANI!"

"THE GOD MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

"IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS OF HIS LIFE DICK FINALLY LOCATED WHAT HE CONSIDER-ED THE LIKELY EST CANDIDATE FOR THE RE-TURNED CHRIST... THE SO-CALLED 'MATTREYA'... IN THE MIST OF THIS LAST FEVERISH ENTHUSIASM, HOWEVER, HE SUFFERED A STROKE, AND DIED SIXTEEN DAYS LATER, ON MARCH 2ND 1982."

PHOTO DRAWINGS TAKEN FROM ELLAHU'S DIARY: THE LAST TESTAMENT. ©1983 BY GREGG AUSTIN, PUBLISHED BY FRANKMATES PRESS/ THE VALENTINE PRESS